

NINTENDO GAMECUBE • DS • GBA
N·GC
ISSUE #109
AUGUST 2005 / £3.99
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INDEPENDENT NINTENDO
SPLINTER CELL REVIEWED
KILLER 7
Huge review and walkthrough!
PLUS!
BATMAN BEGINS
Can it beat Batman: Dark Tomorrow? Well, it wouldn't be hard...
FIRE EMBLEM
Sacred Stones rated. It's the best GBA strategy since Advance Wars!
HULK!
You'll like him when he's angry!
WE ♥ MARIO
12 pages of Mazza madness!
His new games played!
His greatest triumphs!
His strangest moments!
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YES

IT'S-A-HIM.

Mario has changed. While we never actually saw him fix a dodgy boiler or sort out a leaking bog, at least he used to just leap up and down pipes, killing enemies and collecting coins. And while we've seen him play sports before, we've never seen him dancing. Oh well, everyone deserves a night off, especially when you've been working for 24 years. And as our latest, in-depth playtest of his eight new games proved, we still love the guy as much as ever. Although he is pushing it with *Mario Party 7*. Seven!

Aside from Mario, the other big star this month is *Killer 7*. Playing as seven different personas of a murderous, schizophrenic, disabled dude is not only the sickest thing we've ever seen on a videogames console, it's also one of the most original games we've seen in years.

Finally, be sure to check out our new, improved and longer lasting retro section. It's not only Mario who's changing.

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
See Mario wearing a turban in front of the Taj Mahal. Really…



Go to page 83 to find out how you can get **NGC** delivered direct to your door, before it hits the news stands. With a free copy of *Splinter Cell: PT* too.

WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



■ First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

■ A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

■ Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 13 years of Ninty love right there.

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!



ALL NEW RETRO

AND IT'S FULLY EXPANDED

Our glourious new regular, packed with ancient goodness.



WHAT NEXT FOR MARIO?

A BIG YEAR FOR PLUMBERS

A 12 page special on The Moustache's past, present and future. You're gonna love it.

PAGE 20

WE ♥ MARIO

■ A STAGGERING EIGHT NEW GAMES! SEE MARIO AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE…



3 PAGE 45

4 PAGE 62

KILLER 7
VIOLENCE GONE WEIRD
If you think you've seen it all, think again. Massive ten page review on Capcom's mentalist adventure.

5 PAGE 84

GAMING GONE TOO FAR
STRICTLY FOR THE OBSESSED
Some people like Nintendo, some love them. Others? Well…

WHAT'S IN NGC?
Everything worth knowing for this month – and beyond…

PREVIEWS
Amazing new games coming your way.

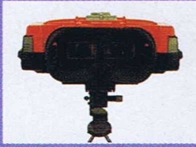




NEWS
The latest rumours, truths and goings-on.

REGULARS
We like them so much we print them every month.

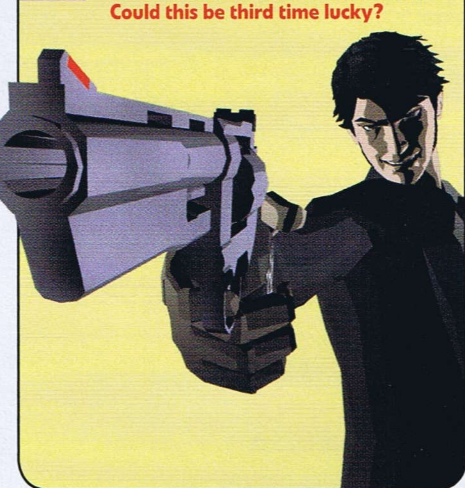


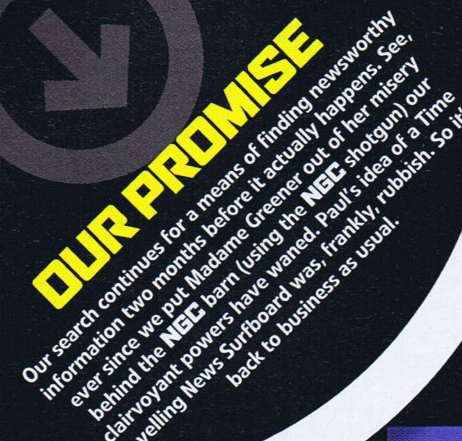


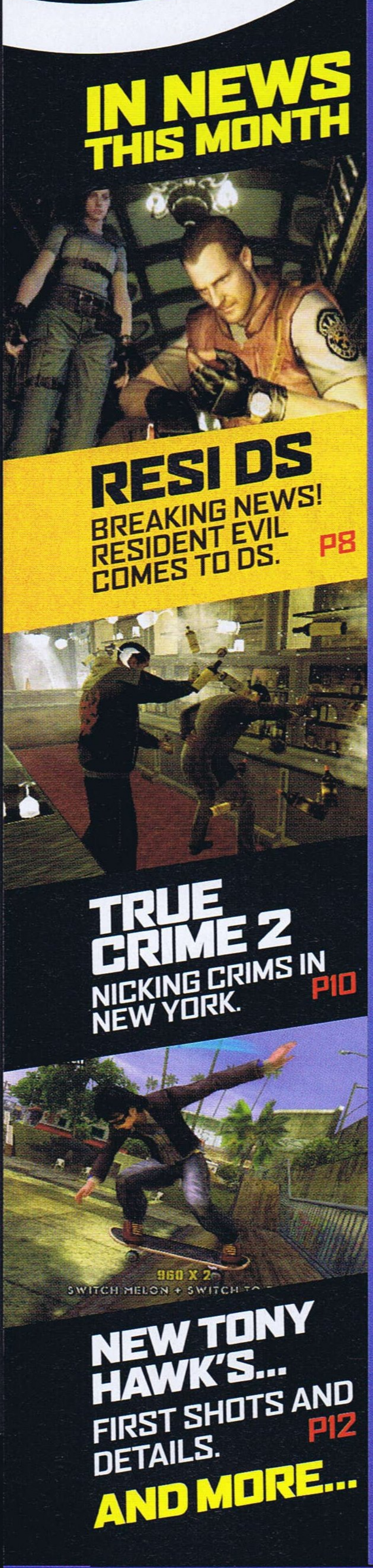
REVIEWS
Ways to blow your hard-earned cash.



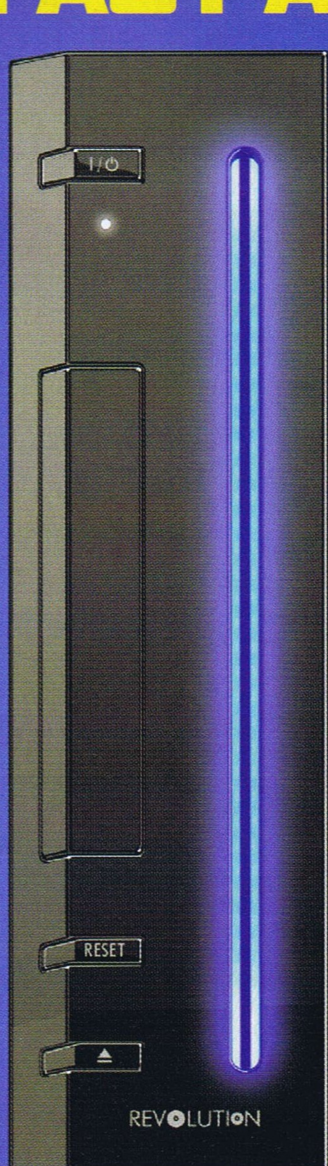








REVOLUTION FACT AND FICTION



The freshest facts and falsest, er, falsehoods…

MAKING OLD GAMES LIKE NEW

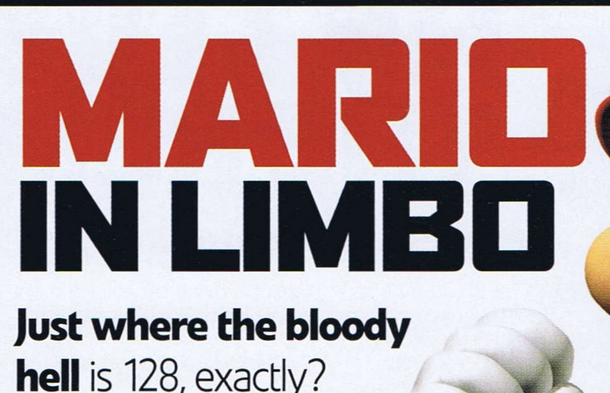
Recent comments from Nintendo have suggested that Revolution's compatibility with its huge back-catalogue may have an added bonus – revamped visuals. Yep, Satoru Iwata has admitted that Nintendo are seeing what they can do with *Super Mario World*, using the Revolution's technology. Surely the prospect of a visually updated *Super Mario World*, *Link to the Past*, or, dare we wish it, *Starwing* is enough to get anyone's mouth watering. Whether or not this actually happens, or even whether this will be the case with every old Nintendo game remains to be seen, but it would certainly help bolster this Revolution feature.

While we're on the subject of backwards compatibility, some of you may have seen that enormous list (241 games, if memory serves us correctly) of games supposedly downloadable for Revolution. Well, we can tell you now that that list was a load of rubbish. The best evidence for this is the fact that many of the games on that list were never even finished, let alone released. *Cabbage*, *Jungle Emperor Leo* and *Buggy Boogie* are three that spring to mind. Three games that were not just cancelled, but *famously* cancelled. Honestly, some people will believe anything.

NO HIGH DEFINITION SUPPORT

Not exactly great news, but it may not be as disastrous as some people think. As NoA's Perrin Kaplan explains, "Nintendo doesn't plan for the system to be HD compatible, as that comes with a higher price for both the consumer and the developer creating the game… we believe the games will look brilliant and play brilliantly [on Revolution] and this can all be done without HD."

HDTV is, especially in Europe, still some way off reaching a high percentage of consumers. Even in the US, HDTV penetration doesn't even touch 10%, and even though that figure is expected to rise dramatically over the next five years, the technology is still too expensive to be considered mainstream. That's not to say it doesn't set alarm bells ringing in our brains, though. On a very basic level, it's one feature to strike off against Revolution's competitors, and tech-savvy early adopters, who may be sitting on the fence, could well be swayed by this. Not to mention the fact that, last time around, Nintendo dropped the ball on DVD playback, and they could be seen to be doing the same here…



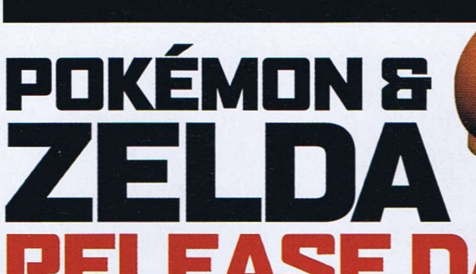
MARIO IN LIMBO

Just where the bloody hell is 128, exactly?



E3 came and went with not a word about the long awaited *Mario 128* – so what the hell's going on? Well, to be honest, it seems that not even the mighty Nintendo actually know, but one thing's for certain, we won't be seeing it on the Gamecube. Mainly because the team behind Mario's adventures can't create too many games at any one time, so they're 'concentrating on Revolution'.

So what exactly will Mario turn out like? Well, according to Miyamoto, *Mario 128* is 'still floating around' (whatever that means), and that Nintendo are still playing around with ideas, experimenting and doing lots of tests to find the underlying concept that will drive their next 3D Mario adventure. In other words, they're looking for their next FLUDD. If you were hoping for *Mario 128* any time soon then, unfortunately, it looks like you're out of luck.



POKÉMON & ZELDA RELEASE DATES SET



Start getting excited... NOW!



According to Nintendo, *Zelda: Twilight Princess* will be out in the UK in November and, by the looks of things, the game is set for a simultaneous worldwide release. Something we've not had the pleasure of seeing since *Ocarina of Time*. Likewise, *Pokémon XD* will hit stores across Europe in November, although importers will be able to pick up an English language version slightly earlier in October.

If you're anything like us though, you'll ignore both of those games and concentrate all of your precious anticipation juices on the forthcoming, and long-awaited *Chicken Little* and *Cocoto Fishing Master* on Gamecube. Which will both be heading your way this autumn. Hmm, we can't wait.



REVOLUTION PAD

As ever, the most crucial part of understanding how Revolution will work comes down to the controller itself. Miyamoto recently stated that this is still heavily under wraps to prevent rivals from stealing its ideas, but that hasn't stopped unscrupulous net-hoaxers from trying to whip us all up into a frenzy. Two of our favourite fakes include this utterly faceless (but still rather stylish) black controller – accompanied by Russian text for added authenticity – and a clearly photoshopped Wavebird, which included a haptic, tactile touch-screen (which can change shape for different button configurations) and a hidden gyroscope that, conveniently, is housed exactly where a Wavebird's batteries are hidden. Genius.



SHORT CUTS



PETER PARKER DOES DS

The world's most curiously hyphenated hero returns to the DS with *Ultimate Spider-Man*. It's due out around October time, and like its Gamecube big brother, it looks set to be a cel-shaded version of its predecessor. So rather than having a large-but-bland 3D city to roam, the gameplay is 2D-style platforming with very snazzy graphics. There's going to be a four-player deathmatch mode, too.

RETURN OF THE REMAKE...

Resident Evil remake set for the DS

Now if this doesn't get you excited, nothing will. It has come to our attention that Capcom are working on a remake of the first *Resident Evil* for the DS, only this time using the same camera perspective and controls as the exceptionally brilliant *Resident Evil 4* on Gamecube. That's right, a fully 3D version of the original survival horror, all in the palm of your hand.

Unfortunately (and perhaps understandably) Capcom clammed up no sooner than they had opened their mouths, so exact details are very scarce. They did, however, explain that the touch-screen would, in one instance, be used to attack, with slashes of the stylus dictating the swipes of Chris Redfield or Jill Valentine's knife.

Now, the more cynical among you may well bemoan the fact that this is, technically, another REmake of a game that's nearly ten years old, but in our opinion it's definitely something to look forward to. Anyone who's played *Resi 4* (and that should be *all* of you by now) will testify to the difference a simple perspective change can make to the overall gameplay experience, and the chance to play through the original adventure with the added versatility of dual-screens and touch-screen control will certainly breath new life an old game.

Hopefully, Capcom will use the touch-screen for full analogue aiming (giving extra depth to the combat) as well as adding extra content, like puzzles, locations and situations to help keep things feeling nice and new.

The only thing that worries us slightly is the whether or not the DS will cope with the 3D environments. On the up-side, the original *Resident Evil* does, for the most part, take place in claustrophobic rooms and corridors, so it'll be easier for the DS to handle than, say, the large exteriors of something like *Resi 4*. And given the fact that Capcom have been firing on all cylinders this generation, we have every faith that this could turn out to be something rather special.



Nintendo Nutters

Does anyone in Britain have a bigger collection than this? Pawl Courtney from Hampshire has bought virtually everything released by Nintendo over the last ten years, amassing a house-filling array of N64 and Gamecube gear.

Pawl has every N64 PAL game, plus around 28 consoles (coloured variations) and the highly prized complete set of 64DD software and hardware. He isn't so well-stocked with NTSC games (only 150 of those), but it's still more than we ever had on N64 mag.

Luckily, he's completely up to date with Gamecube titles, owning every single of one them – and multiple copies of some – for a total of 395 games. "I end up with doubles and trebles because of cover art variations and so forth," explains Pawl. Because he also buys every bundle pack, he's got 'around nine' Gamecubes, a Panasonic Q, and in excess of 30 memory cards.

If you reckon you're a bigger Nintendo fan than Pawl, and have got the games collection, empty wallet and tattoos to prove it, write to Nintendo Nutters, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk.





revolution

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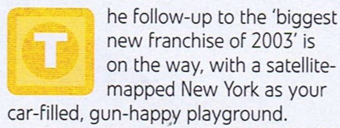

△ They've decided that you're allowed to be slightly more brutal this time around.


△ There's a massive choice of vehicles for you to, erm, 'commandeer'.


△ As with the last game, there will be multiple endings.

TRUE CRIME 2

GTA-style sequel heads to Gamecube.



The follow-up to the 'biggest new franchise of 2003' is on the way, with a satellite-mapped New York as your car-filled, gun-happy playground.

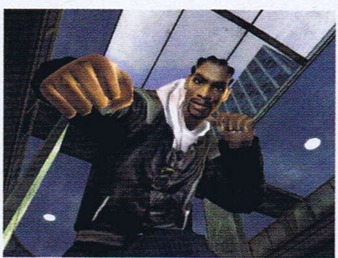
Forget about *True Crime: Streets Of LA*, with its fussy missions and bizarre Chinese dragons. This one promises to be much better, featuring detailed interior scenes and neighbourhoods which look progressively more neglected as crime takes over.

Once again you'll play a cop, but this time you won't get so heavily penalised for doing the more 'fun' things in life, like executing tramps or mowing down shoplifters. You can administer justice by snapping necks, stabbing kidneys and leaping around in slow motion, spraying bullets all over the place.

It's out towards the end of the year. Hopefully we'll be able to preview it in more depth before then.



△ You'll only be driving around Manhattan, so the map is going to be smaller than *Streets of LA's*. But then, driving for half an hour down Sunset Blvd was boring...


△ You can boot the doors down and enter almost any building.


△ As well as guns, you can use double-handed kinives, swords, bats and clubs.

WIN! POKÉMON DVDS

Because you love them…

If you've ever bought a Pokémon game, you're in good company. The series is still doing fantastically well on Game Boy, as demonstrated by the recently announced shipment of the 100 millionth *Pokémon* cartridge (nine million more than this time last year).

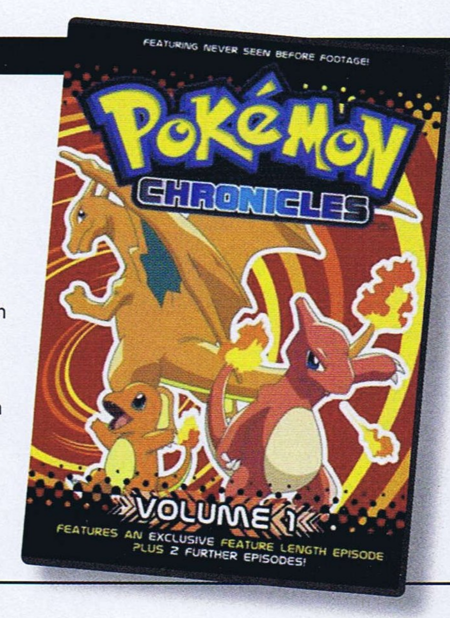
To celebrate this momentous marketing opportunity, we've got five copies of the Pokémon Chronicles Vol. 1 DVD to give away. It's a compilation of episodes from the TV series, and has been hailed by international Pokémon experts as 'da bomb'.

Simply choose the most plausible Pokéfact from the following selection and you could be in with a chance of winning a copy. Email the answer to ngc@futurenet.co.uk with **'CHRONICLES'** as the subject line, or write to us at the usual address. The closing date is July 15th.

A. If launched into orbit, a cluster of 100 million Pokémon carts would collapse to form a black hole, through which the entire world would be squeezed like toothpaste.

B. 100 million Pokémon carts contain enough plastic to make a Pikachu statue four times the size of Everest.

C. Pokémon has made a lot of people extremely rich.





CHAIN GANG

Proof that NGC has the scariest readers.

Back in issue 106 we gave you the chance to win one of five limited edition *Resident Evil 4* chainsaw controllers. These blood-spattered collectors' items would set you back around £30 if you were lucky enough to find one in the shops. They're a bit awkward to handle, but brandish one while playing the game and it would be a brave sibling who dares ask if you'd mind switching over to Neighbours in ten minutes.

Anyway, we asked you to dress up as the Chainsaw Dude, aka Dr Salvador, from *Resi 4*. And you did! Our five favourite pics win a controller, and our thanks go out to everyone brave enough to get into the neck-chopping spirit of things. Well done to you all.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

You'll never guess what, he's back! Again!

We've had *Spider-Man* meets *GTA*, we're waiting for Hulk's attempt to offer gamers the freedom of the city, and coming soon to Gamecube and DS, here's Tony Hawk's effort.

Set in LA during the '80s, you can go roam anywhere in search of the best spots for your board or BMX (which has a dual analogue control system). Story missions and side-quests are scattered all over the vast city.

Old-school gamers are also catered for, with a Classic mode made from two-minute portions of the early Tony Hawk titles. It's slated for a late autumn release.

△ Please say you can't choose your haircut this time around…

SHORT CUTS

SCOOBY DOO IN PINK PYJAMA SHAME!

Normally we wouldn't so much as scoop the poop off a Scooby Doo game, but when this one showed up, with Scooby sporting a shameful pink lycra outfit and a set of fairy wings, we thought we'd take a closer look. And here it is – as close as we dared get, to be brutally honest, but it does look like fun. Plus it features Adam West – TV's original Batman – and a whole lot of canine kung-fu.

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – but slippages can occur. We're not psychic, goddamit. All titles Gamecube unless stated otherwise.

JULY

15	Fantastic Four	Activision
15	Fantastic Four (GBA)	Activision
22	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	Take-Two
22	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (GBA)	Take-Two

AUGUST

4	NGC out today!	
25	Juka and the Monophonic Menace (GBA)	Orbital
26	The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	Vivendi
29	Dynasty Warriors Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Blades of Thunder 2 (DS)	Summitsoft
TBC	Pac 'n' Roll (DS)	Namco
TBC	One Piece (GBA)	Bandai
TBC	Rebelstar: Tactical Command (GBA)	Namco
TBC	Texas Hold 'Em (DS)	Majesco

SEPTEMBER

6	Cinderella: The Game (GBA)	Buena Vista
6	Lizzie McGuire 3 (GBA)	Buena Vista
6	That's So Raven 2 (GBA)	Buena Vista
15	Scurge: Hive	Orbital Media
30	Advance Wars: Dual Strike (DS)	Nintendo
TBC	Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco
TBC	Lost in Blue (DS)	Konami
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (DS)	THQ
TBC	Sky Dancers (GBA)	Crave
TBC	Spartan: Total Warrior	Sega
TBC	SR Monkey Team Hyperforce Go! (GBA)	Buena Vista
TBC	Ultimate Arcade Games (GBA)	Telegames
TBC	Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
TBC	Ultimate Pocket Games (GBA)	Telegames
TBC	Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision
TBC	Ultimate Spider-Man (DS)	Activision
TBC	Ultimate Spider-Man (GBA)	Activision
TBC	W.I.T.C.H. (GBA)	Buena Vista
TBC	WWE Day of Reckoning 2	THQ

OCTOBER

Backyard Skateboarding (GBA)	Atari
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow (DS)	Konami
Dancing Stage Mario Mix	Nintendo
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy (GBA)	THQ
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones (GBA)	Nintendo
Geist	Nintendo
Guilty Gear: Dust Strikers (DS)	Majesco
Lunar Genesis (DS)	Ubisoft
Metroid Prime: Hunters (DS)	Nintendo
Nintendogs	Nintendo
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney (DS)	Capcom
Pokémon Emerald (GBA)	Nintendo
Odama	Nintendo
Shogun Warrior: The Lost Army	Namco
Spyro Shadow Legacy	Vivendi
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge (DS)	THQ
Ultimate Puzzle Games (GBA)	Telegames
X-Men Legends 2	Activision
Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS)	Konami
Zatch Bell	Bandai
Zoo Tycoon (DS)	THQ

NOVEMBER

A Boy and His Blob (DS)	Majesco
Animal Crossing (DS)	Nintendo
Atomic Betty (GBA)	Namco
Call of Duty 2: The Big Red One	Activision
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi
Crash Tag Team Racing (DS)	Vivendi
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	Nintendo
Gunstar Super Heroes (GBA)	Sega
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (DS)	EA
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (GBA)	EA
Harvest Moon DS	Nintendo
Hello Kitty Roller Rescue	Namco
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer (DS)	THQ
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	EA
Need For Speed: Most Wanted (DS)	EA
Mario Kart (DS)	Nintendo
Mario Party 7	Nintendo
Marvel vs Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	Midway
The Movies	Activision
Pac-Man World 3	Namco
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft
Peter Jackson's King Kong (GBA)	Ubisoft
Peter Jackson's King Kong (DS)	Ubisoft
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	Nintendo
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within (DS)	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia 3: Kindred Blades	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia 3: Kindred Blades (GBA)	Ubisoft
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	Namco
Scratch! Viewtiful Joe (DS)	Capcom
Shrek SuperSlam	Activision
Shrek SuperSlam (DS)	Activision
Shrek SuperSlam (GBA)	Activision
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 4: Lockdown	Ubisoft
Touch! Kirby	Nintendo
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3 Mutant Nightmare	Konami
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3 Mutant Nightmare (GBA)	Konami
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Buena Vista
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (GBA)	Buena Vista
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (DS)	Buena Vista
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 3	Ubisoft
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland (DS)	Activision

TBC 2005

Age of Empires: Age of Kings	Majesco
ATV: Quad Frenzy	Majesco
Battalion Wars	Nintendo
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ
Bust-A-Move (DS)	Majesco
Curse of the Were-Rabbit	Frontier
Dora the Explorer: Superstar Adventures (GBA)	Take-Two
Dragon Booster (DS)	Konami
EverGirl (working title) (GBA)	THQ
Finding Nemo (DS)	THQ
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	Konami
Frogger: Helmet Chaos (DS)	Konami
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo
Lunar Genesis (DS)	Ubisoft
Mario Baseball	Nintendo
Metroid Pinball (DS)	Nintendo
Nicktoons (working title) (DS)	THQ
Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus
Space Channel 5: Ulala's Cosmic Attack (GBA)	Sega
SpongeBob SquarePants (working title) (DS)	THQ
Super Mario Bros. (DS)	Nintendo

YOUR MOST WANTED

Which games are you most looking forward to? Scribble them on this form, send it to us and you'll be entered in a prize draw to win a copy of *Donkey Konga 2.*

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Name ....

Address ....

Postcode ....

Send your entries to Your Most Wanted, NGC magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

NGC MOST WANTED

The games we're dreaming about (and in some cases, playing)...



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO
This doesn't really need an introduction does it? It's the only game in living memory that has made grown men weep right before our very eyes. So it has to be good.
IN A NUTSHELL: It's like a bigger, prettier *Ocarina of Time.*

2 GEIST NINTENDO
First person shooters are a rare breed on Gamecube, and after playing the E3 demo, it's safe to say that this will fill the void nicely. Even if the textures are rubbish.
IN A NUTSHELL: An FPS with an intriguing story and ghost-based jiggery-pokery.

3 MARIO KART NINTENDO
A DS version of everyone's favourite racer. We played it at E3 and the verdict is that it's near perfect. It's even got a whole cup dedicated to retro tracks from past games.
IN A NUTSHELL: Drive Mario and friends around in karts, shooting Koopa shells.

4 NEW ENTRY CHIBI ROBO NINTENDO
Chibi hibi nibi! CHIBI! Hibi chibi? If Scatman John was alive today, he'd no doubt throw his celebrity endorsement behind *Chibi Robo.* Genius.
IN A NUTSHELL: Household robot performs strangely addictive household tasks.

5 NEW ENTRY ANIMAL CROSSING DS NINTENDO
You can now take your small town with you wherever you go. So there's no excuse for letting weeds run wild in your garden.
IN A NUTSHELL: It was interesting on the Gamecube

SEVEN KILLERS, ONE MIND

8 x Thursday

Kun Lan Launche Wave of Terrorist

REPORTS confirmed today that the evil underworld mastermind *Kun Lan* is responsible for the waves of terrorist attacks that have gripped the world in fear for the past two months.

Using a virus forms ordinary people int Smile' — *walking timebo seek out the nearest humans and self destruct* – Kun Lan has promised that his war of terror will continue until all the World's nations are under his control.

In response to the threat, the governments of the World have turned to the 65 year-old Harman Smith and his team of profess assassins – *the killer7* – to se out and eliminate the threa to the Happy New World Peace Order of 1998.

Mr Smith w have killed Kun last year

Kun Lan

killer7

"Stylish, slick, smooth and sexy - this is going to blow your mind"
Official PlayStation 2 Magazine

PlayStation 2

killer7

CAPCOM



PlayStation 2





www.killer-7.com

TIMEWARP



With Mark Green

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THE FAMILY TREE

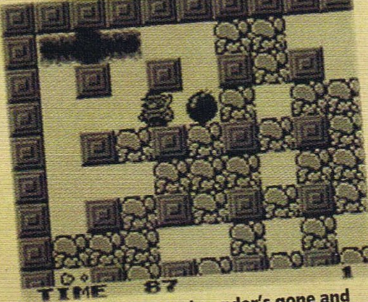
The sordid history of today's bestest games

What a Lovely Pair

This month, to celebrate Mario & Luigi 2 coming down the pipe in November, we look at the best Nintendo pairings of yesteryear.



Δ Mario shows his stupidity in *Mario and Wario*. No wonder the dino's laughing his face off.



Δ *Wario Blast* – the bounder's gone and nicked some-one else's game.

MARIO & WARIO (1993, SUPER FAMICOM)

There was barely a squeak out of the add-on mouse that Nintendo released for the Super Famicom. *Mario Paint* came and went, and that was about it. But if you called Japan your home in the '90s, you *did* get this unusual action-puzzler – and Mario demonstrating exactly what hammering your skull against bricks for a living does to your IQ.

How? By failing to foil Wario's bucket-on-your-head scheme by simply *lifting the thing off*. Luigi was just as empty-brained: vacantly stroking his moustache at the top of the level and expecting old bucket-face to cross a roomful of spikes *by himself*. It was left to a nameless fairy (your mouse cursor) to conjure blocks in and out of existence to prevent Mario perforating his buttocks.

There was the odd hazard thrown in – timed blocks, bats, hapless Goombas half-heartedly giving life another go – and you could place Yoshi or Peach in Mario's place for a harder/easier time. Otherwise, 100 levels of suspiciously easy play was nothing to get excited about – and Nintendo veterans were probably ready to jump into a volcano at the sight of *another* set of lava levels.

MARIO BROS (1983, NES)

Mario and that other bloke team up to scrape turtles and crabs out of their pipes – and curse the fact they seem to have greased the floors with cooking fat before starting the job. Reheated endlessly for the *Mario Advance* series.

MARIO & YOSHI (1991, NES)

The overworked dino-horse gives his aching spine a rest and gets Mario to do all the graft: flipping plates in Nintendo's 185th attempt to make An Exciting New Puzzle Game That's A Bit Like Tetris. Simply called *Yoshi* in the US – that's showbiz, Mazz (see also page 57).

BATTLETOADS AND DOUBLE DRAGON (1993, NES)

Preposterous kick-punching crossover of popular NES comedy combat-toads (devised by *GoldenEye 007* overlords Rare, no less) and blockbusting arcade musclecakes. We've lost you, right? It was awful anyway.

WARIO BLAST FEATURING BOMBERMAN! (1994, GAME BOY)

Long-forgotten Nintendo/Hudson crossover for Game Boy, as the evil one was roped in to add 'consumer appeal' to the *Bomberman* game released in Japan. Contains probably the most inept drawing of Wario ever put to pixel.

MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG (2004, GBA)

Ever since he chucked barrels down from the top of a building site, we've suspected Donkey Kong has always been one snapped synapse away from tearing Mario limb from limb. Go for the sophisticated 'tie-wearer' look all you like, DK – you can't change who you are.

Gaming Family Trees, A Definitive Guide 1003

RETRO NEWS

News rounded up from the wild world of retrogaming



SPEED LINK

Official Nintendo world records are toppling like dizzy giraffes. Michael Damiani of Texas finished *The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX* on Game Boy Color in a mind-boggling one hour and 45 minutes. He can finish the entire first cave before you've finished breakfast, thanks to a cunning technique that involves grabbing Roc's Feather early on and bouncing his way through the entire game for speed's sake. Michael has also completed *A Link To The Past* in an impossible two hours. We hate him!

■ www.twingalaxies.com



Pic: Matthew Hawkins

CONS-OLD

At the launch of New York's glittering Nintendo World store in May, there was a rare glimpse at some eye-opening Nintendo history. The Nintendo AVS (Advance Video System) was what the NES originally looked like, unveiled in 1985 before Nintendo redesigned it as the familiar fat grey box we all knew, loved, then dumped. AVS extras like a full plug-in keyboard, a flight stick and an *audio cassette player* were on show – and just look at those controllers. Uglier than Wario in a wind tunnel.

■ www.fort90.com/journal/?p=211



UNLOCK HISTORY

Joining towels, pixel mosaics and Pepsi bottle-tops on the heap of Japanese retro Nintendo tat that's currently three times the size of Mount Fuji are Nintendo history keyrings. Transparent keyholders, they act as magical crystal prisons for teensy-tiny versions of Nintendo's five home consoles. Toymaker Bandai seems to be required by law to keep churning out this stuff – we also found superb 'dot graph' cell phone straps on their website – so look out for Mario handkerchiefs and Princess Peach toilet cleaners soon.

■ www.ncsxshop.com

NET TENDO

BOARD OF NINTENDO

Nintendo has never been shy about plastering its 'brands' on top of anything that moves, doesn't move, or occasionally twitches. The website Boardgamegeek.com (which has been 'serving the boardgame community since 2000', apparently) is stuffed with Nintendo-based board games that look a little cheap (*four* games starring Mario?), but which you'd give your big toenail for anyway. Milton Bradley's *Legend of Zelda* doesn't look too bad, though – a Ludo-alike, but with 'Moblin' brilliantly misspelled ('Molbrin', we ask you), and Princess Zelda somewhat resembling a medieval Fern Britten.

■ www.boardgamegeek.com/catbrowse.php3?id=101

'TENDO TOY

You probably know about the playing cards that an embryonic Nintendo dealt to Japan in the 1880s, but what about this rip-off of Lego? 'N&B Block' delighted the helmet-haired Japanese children of the '60s, long before old man Yamauchi bet the company's future on electronic gaming. Check out the early Nintendo logo on the box, and stroke your moustache knowingly as you notice that one of the boxes of bricks more-or-less matches the colour scheme of the original Japanese Famicom.

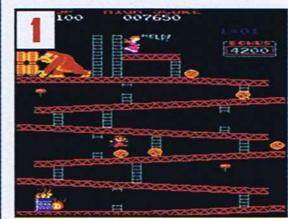
■ http://home7.highway.ne.jp/clublego/deai/deai3.html





5 THINGS

Five explosive game expo moments



1 CES 1983

Thanks to some confusion over an unlicensed version of *Donkey Kong* which was on display at this show, Atari lost its chance to officially license Nintendo's Famicom console. The Big N took the Nintendo Entertainment System to the US by itself, and the rest is history.



2 CES 1992

Probably the sixtieth time we've mentioned this, and we won't stop mentioning it until you listen. Sony were due to make a CD add-on for the SNES, but Nintendo publicly dumped them at this show. Sony promptly used what they'd learned to create… the Playstation. Oops!



3 CES 1994

Donkey Kong Country made show goers wobbly with the Best Graphics Ever – giving next generation consoles and developers something to chew over, and it managed to make mankind fall in love with Nintendo's long-since forgotten monkey all over again.



4 SPACEWORLD 1995

Floors collapsed under the sheer weight of dropped jaws as the Nintendo 64 made its first appearance. It's hard to imagine now how amazing it was to witness Mario scampering about the Mushroom Kingdom in glorious 3D. Just imagine something *really* amazing.



5 E3 2002

This wasn't particularly long ago, clearly. But we'll never be able to scrub our brains of the moment when Shigsy, halfway through demonstrating *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* live to the world, lost the sword he was meant to open the next door with. Then gave up.

RETRO TAT

The NES is back. Again.

The NES is the new iPod, clearly. Hot on the heels of Blaze's Pocket Fami comes Generation NEX – another new bit of kit that plays Nintendo games from decade 80. Not only does it look a bit like the NES (no doubt Nintendo's lawyers are already emerging from their pneumatic steel pods), it's kitted out with a handful of modern features, like support for wireless controllers (just £30 each!) and the power of rumbling. If you've got a cupboardful of old games and your original NES is now a makeshift home for a family of mice, this might work.



WRITE IN!

Have you reinvented an old console for people who can afford '80s NES games at inflated eBay prices? Tell us and we'll name and shame you in these very pages. Email ngc@futurenet.co.uk.

THIS MONTH IN NINTENDO

The world according to us in **July 1998 (Super Play Issue 12).**





△ **Don't feel so big now, eh? *Vortex*'s bosses were absolute gits, regularly ramming metal death down your throat before you'd even had a chance to fight back. This one had a pleasant habit of forcing you off the float-o-platform to instant death, too.**



△ **The space bits were straight out of *Starwing* – right down to these rings.**



△ **Even the Training mode had people curling into balls and gently weeping.**



GAME OF THE MONTH
VORTEX
SUPER NINTENDO



Robot rumble extraordinaire from the people that brought you Star Fox the first.

WHAT'S THIS? After *Starwing* (aka the original *Star Fox*, the first Super Nintendo cart with the 3D-capable Super FX chip inside), UK coders Argonaut did some of this.

THE BIG DEAL: Proper 3D was still new enough to bring grown men to their knees, and *Vortex*'s free-roaming blasting trumped *Starwing*'s on-rails laser melee.

WHAT WE THOUGHT: "The polygons whizz around with almost unnatural speed and smoothness" was about as excited as we got, although we'd perked up enough by the end of the review to give *Vortex* a 90% score. That's despite *Vortex*'s terrifying toughness, and tricky controls on all four vehicles (buggy, tank, jet and big purple robot).

THE NINTENDO LINE: "A Storm's Coming." Actually, *Vortex* was published in the UK by Sony, of all people.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Despite much anticipation, it seems *Vortex* didn't rocket up the charts. Most of the team's still around, though – artist Alistair McNally is now working on Medal of Honor games at EA, and Nic Cusworth designs mobile titles at IdeaWorks3D.

AND: *Vortex* was apparently intended to be a licensed Transformers game.

EVERYONE WAS PLAYING...

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER SUPER NINTENDO





One reason not to bother inventing a time machine: go back nine years and the charts are exactly the same.

How times change. 1994 World Cup fever booted *FIFA* straight to the top of the charts – relegating the *official* World Cup game (then the separate property of publisher US Gold) to number two. *FIFA International Soccer* was actually a cheap transfer of a year-old game from Sega's rival console, the Megadrive, but still – what a player. Its isometric perspective was a special present for your eyes, and ridiculous five-player action was possible with a plug-in accessory. "Fantastic with a few friends and a genuine contender," we cheered, showering *FIFA* with 89 percentage points. And no one, it seemed, thought it odd back then that paying for the FIFA licence didn't extend to getting the actual player names in the game.

OTHER REVIEWS THIS MONTH

Super Bomberman 2
Jazzed-up follow-up to bomb-happy multiplayer favourite.
91%

Cotton 100%
Absurd fairy-on-a-broomstick action from the *Zoo Keeper* team.
79%

Knights of the Round
Medieval England, Capcom-style. Swordy. Also, rubbish.
51%

WORST GAME...

WIZARDRY V SUPER NINTENDO





Nintendo owners loved RPGs back in the '90s, so Capcom dediced to take advantage by squeezing out this dungeons-and-dragons pap, originally a PC game and well past its sell-by date. The built-in mapping feature arrived so late in the game, the manual encouraged you to "use graph paper" to draw up your plan, and the coders populated featureless dungeons with characters called G'bli Gedook. "I hope we never see anything like this again," sighed Zy Nicholson, Super Play's resident hippy. 39% it was.

OTHER NEWS

Old news, tastefully repackaged.



NINTENDO 3D

With the Nintendo 64 already on its way, Nintendo unexpectedly announced a new console that would let you "experience Virtual Reality without a head-mounted headset." Yep – the doomed Virtual Boy. Little did we know "no headset" meant squatting down in front of the thing.



JAPAN 'NEWS'

Live from Hell City: Super Play's monthly column from Japan. Rather than talk about games, columnist Nihon Sekai-Yusu (who we suspect was made up – no-one's telling) informed bemused readers about a local rice shortage and an electronic toilet able to "analyse your urine and faeces."



NO LETTER UP

Valuable answers to reader letters included "The Japanese view heroism and evil differently to us," "Don't go anywhere near the inside of your Super Nintendo with lighter fluid," and "In conclusion, Mr Johnston, go away." We're much more pleasant now.



Bring back the memories – or fill in the brainholes with new ones.

CLASSIC BOXART

MEGA MAN 2: NES (1990)



This is still a great game, make no mistake. But there's no need to feel odd about rubbing your eyes in disbelief at this rendering of a multi-muscled man-freak and his adventures with a form of sub-playschool pencil crayon art – it even has 'State Of The Art' stamped at the top of the picture, seemingly without a trace of irony. Capcom used to regularly embarrass themselves with boxes and artwork of this calibre, until settling on the more acceptable look of today's cutesy boy-hero.

CLASSIC CUTSCENE

YOSHI'S ISLAND: SNES (1995)

With Luigi and the stork rescued from Baby Bowser's little claws, some weepy music kicks in and the credits roll as the two infant Mario Bros. finally complete their arduous journey to their expectant parents in the Mushroom Kingdom. And as Mr and Mrs Mario cradle the twins in their arms, the 'level complete' theme tune from the original *Super Mario Bros.* rings out. Sniffle.

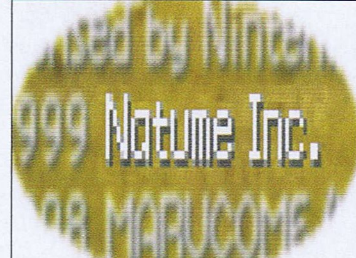
Looks like they have arrived where mom and dad live....







Heroes are born!



CLASSIC COCK-UP

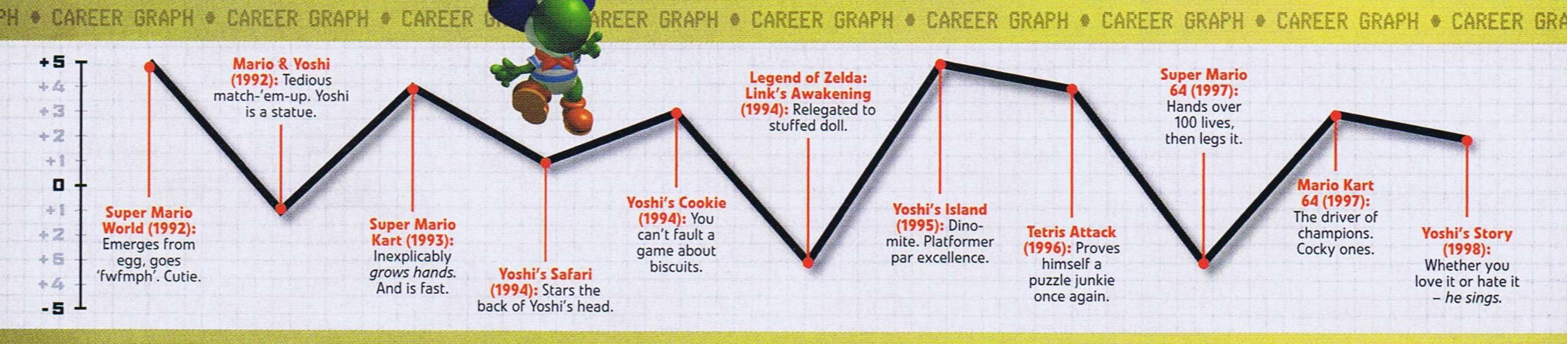
HARVEST MOON 64 : N64 (1999)

The previous generation's version of the excellent farm-'em-up *Harvest Moon* was as bewitchingly pleasant as it always has been. But while we can forgive the Japanese developers Natsume the odd spelling mistake and burst of incomprehensible or amusing Japlish here or there, *getting your own name wrong* – and on the title screen, no less – is something else altogether.

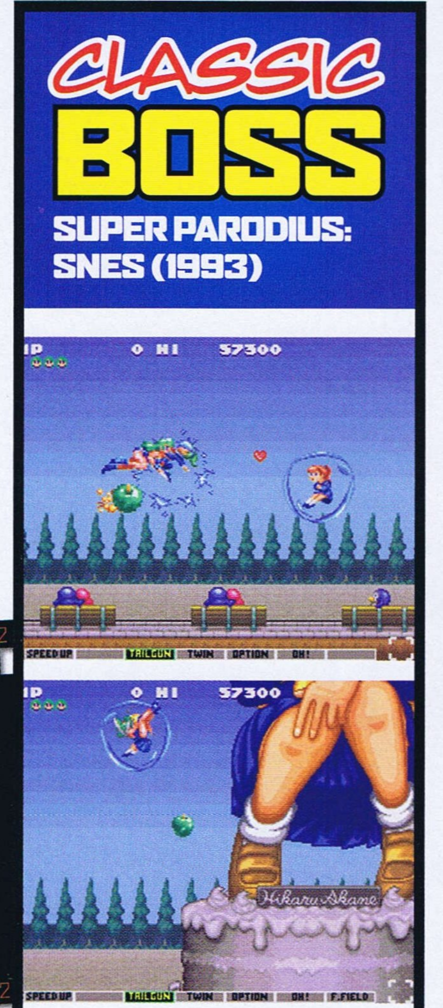


CAREER GRAPH: YOSHI

The career highlights of… he *is* a dinosaur, right?



CLASSIC BOSS
SUPER PARODIUS: SNES (1993)



Konami not only laid down the template for scrolling shooters in *Gradius* (aka *Nemesis*) – they also dedicated a good chunk of their time to sending the whole thing up as well, with the *Parodius* series of mickey-takes. *Super Parodius* had something brain-messingly quirky to show you at every turn – flying pigs one minute, rocket-chucking penguins the next. And while it's tough picking a standout boss from the game – it's hard not to love a creature made half of cat, half of pirate ship – the award really has to go to the 100-foot tall Las Vegas dancer-lady-monster. Kill it, for God's sake, kill it!



△ We're keeping the shots of Vela running on this reflective floor to ourselves.

CLASSIC LEVEL
JET FORCE GEMINI MIZAR'S PALACE

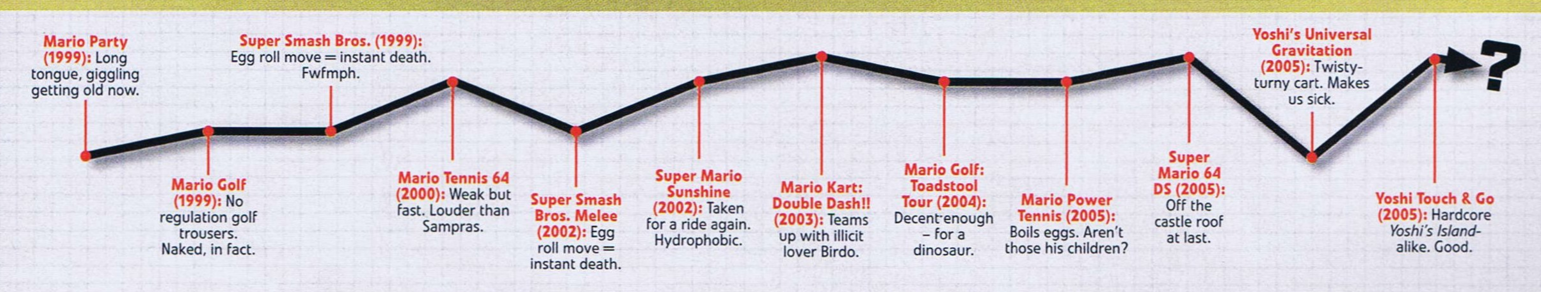
There's a magic about the N64's *Jet Force Gemini*. Our spines still tingle just thinking about the ethereal choir that rang out as you switched on the N64. While Rare's unique blasterpiece had beauty and brilliance oozing from the seams, the Mizar's Palace Lobby level *really* knocked us out. Quite the achievement, given that it came after hours and hours of breathless excitement, eye-exploding gorgeousness and bouncing, dismembered ant heads.

In truth, it wasn't really a full level – just a short climactic skirmish for Juno, the male human third of the *JFG* power-trio. But you couldn't forget it. Partly because the open-plan layout gave you nowhere to hide, and created a frantic, difficult battle beneath the palace gates. But the real knockout was the stunning polished floor. It reflected *everything* with crystal clarity: the blue flare of Juno's gun, the expertly-animated insect troops, the torches flickering in the distance… We probably weren't the only ones sent packing by alien ants because we were too busy staring agog at our reflection.



LOST CLASSIC
BANGAI-O: NINTENDO 64 (1999)

If you didn't play this on the Nintendo 64, we doubt you'll get the chance again. Ever. One of those obscure blasters from shoot-'em-up gods Treasure (*Ikaruga*), it was only released in Japan, and just 10,000 copies were made. *Bangai-O* harked back to a simpler age of 2D action, with 40-odd levels of gravity-fighting fireworks that had so much going on it actually hurt your eyes. It was rare *not* to see an explosion on-screen at any point, in fact. Superhuman geniuses that Treasure are, *Bangai-O* naturally nabbed 84% from Kittsy at the time. But don't go looking for this N64 rarity – you're much more likely to track down the Dreamcast re-release. Or, say, a yeti.





From pinball wizard to techno Fred Astaire…

If you could paint a picture that screamed Nintendo, chances are it would be a moustachioed plumber in red and blue overalls. With his mouth open.

He's one of the oldest characters in videogaming, with roots stretching back as far as 1981, and he's inextricably linked with both his creator, Shigeru Miyamoto, and the company that has shifted close to 180 million copies of his many games.

Despite not speaking in a game until Charles Martinet first chirped, "It's-a me!" in the summer of 1996, Mario is the voice of Nintendo. And as such, he stars in a disproportionate number of their best titles.

Lately it may seem as though Nintendo has been selling the family silver, allowing Mario to appear in *NBA Street* and even attempting to turn him into a football star. But he has been taking bit parts in everything from pinball sims to arcade F1 games since he was a fledgling sprite.

There are at least eight Mario games currently in development – to our knowledge, an all-time record – and not only have we given every one an extensive hands-on playtest, but we've also rounded up some of the man's most significant and suprising appearances to date.

Without further ado, welcome to Mario's world.

MARIO PAINT
SNES – 1992

CLASSIC MARIO

Scribble using the SNES mouse, until you realise you're actually not a very good artist and opt to stick to colouring the built-in pictures instead. You can also make simple tunes and play a fly-swatting game, as later seen in *Wario Ware*.

It was enough of a success to inspire an entire series on the short-lived 64DD system eight years later. The *Mario Artist* collection included such delights as *Paint Studio*, *Polygon Studio* and, erm, *Talent Studio*. The idea was to capture images using a video camera and use them to make animated 3D models, which you could use in your own games. Except the *Game Maker* portion of the series was never released.

We would have written a bit more about this unusual studio collection, but when we searched the storeroom for our dusty 64DD, there was nothing but a clean spot on one of the shelves and a note from Paul saying he had Ebay'd it to pay for a new camper van engine and some 'sex wax'. Sweet baby Jesus…



DR MARIO
NES – 1990

Being a plumber by trade, Mario is the last man you would want poking around in body cavities and open wounds – imagine what must lurk under his fingernails! But thanks to his favoured position in the Mushroom Kingdom's royal court, there was no public outcry when the toilet-plunging star donned a white coat, clipboard, stethoscope and funny little head-mirror thing, to set himself up in the healthcare business.

Unsurprisingly a serious viral infection soon occurred, though thankfully confined to the specimen beaker Mario had been using to brew his morning cuppa. Unsure of how best to proceed, the 'doctor' filled the rest of the beaker with vitamin pills and gave it a good shake. Lo and behold, not only was the virus completely eradicated, Mario had also, unwittingly, reinvented *Tetris*.

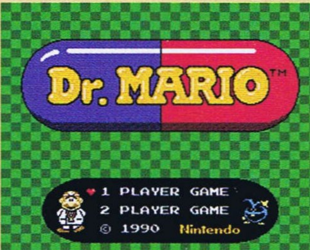


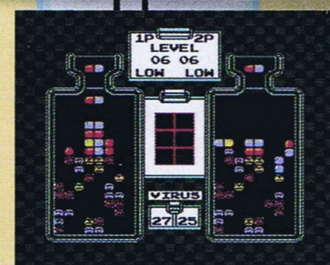
MARIO IS MISSING
SNES – 1993

It took until 2001 before anyone was brave enough to launch a game using Luigi as the headline act, which is why this one is named after the fact that Mario is not in it. If it had been a success, we might all be looking forward to *Mario Is Missing XXVII: The Twilight Princess*.

But there were a couple of good reasons why it didn't make the usual Mario-sized splash. First and foremost, this was basically a geography lesson dressed up as a platform. Imagine the look on some poor kid's face when he unwrapped this instead of *Yoshi's Island* on Christmas morning – priceless. We hope that Santa kept the receipt.

Secondly, once Luigi had used the simple clues to figure out where on earth he was, he was supposed to summon Yoshi from Antarctica (that well-known haven of cold-blooded dinosaurs) using a device called the Globulator – pretty much the only Nintendo gizmo not to appear in *Smash Bros Melee*.





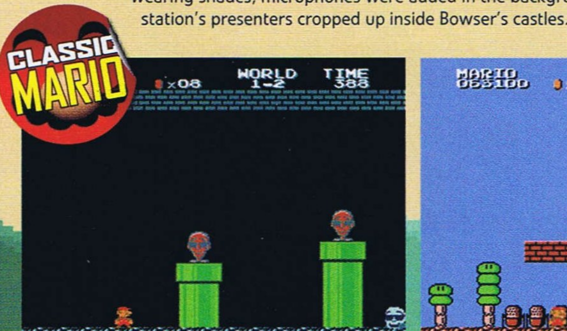
△ Impersonating a doctor can be financially rewarding and lots of fun.

ALL NIGHT NIPPON SUPER MARIO BROS
NES – 1990

Despite a reputation for protecting their intellectual property with Disney-esque fierceness, Nintendo allowed Japanese radio station All Night Nippon to use an entire Mario game as a promotional tool.

This customised version of the first *SMB* game for the Famicom disk drive, was given to a few of lucky listeners. It included the option to play as the high-jumping, slippy-shoed Luigi from the Japanese version of *Super Mario Bros 2*, as well as a handful of courses from that ultra-difficult sequel (known as *The Lost Levels* in the UK).

Graphics were altered to fit the radio theme. Goombas became disembodied heads wearing shades, microphones were added in the background, and the station's presenters cropped up inside Bowser's castles.





△ How things might have been if Rare had invented *Super Mario Bros.*

WRECKING CREW
NES – 1985

After serving apprenticeships in sewer-crawling and stamping on small animals, Mario and Luigi were briefly employed as demolition contractors. Their job was to flatten a series of condemned buildings, which is a technically demanding and very dangerous discipline – dynamite must be placed, tramps must be evicted and residents of nearby tower blocks must haul in the washing permanently displayed on their concrete balconies, to protect it from the inevitable asbestos-laden wall of dust.

However, our thrifty heroes decided to pocket the cash that might otherwise have been wasted on proper tools and public safety. The indestructible twosome simply grabbed sledgehammers and began hitting walls until the whole place fell down on top of them. And they didn't bother checking for signs of occupancy either – the buildings were fully populated, right up until the moment they became piles of rubble and broken bodies, and there was a site foreman who, for reasons known only to himself, wanted to put a stop to our boys' unorthodox urban resculpting.

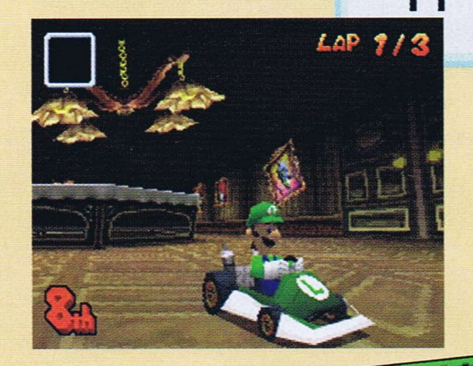


MARIO KART DS

It's the one the fans have been wishing for...




△ In the demo, leaving a DS alone meant the computer took over the race for you.





You have to hop to initiate a powerslide, you drive proper karts instead of Wacky Races vehicles and you don't carry passengers. Now if that doesn't suggest Nintendo has really listened to feedback from Mario Kart fans, how about online multiplayer races and classic SNES tracks redone in 3D? Tempted?

If the vintage courses contained in the Retro Cup make it sound like a Mario Kart Best Of, there are enough gameplay changes to make it seem like a fresh playing experience.

The powerslide system has a 'secret' boost that's pitched halfway between the N64 and GBA versions – holding the kart at the right angle activates a brief turbo boost, like it does on the GBA, but to get it there you have to waggle the D-pad, like on the N64.

If you pick up triple shells, you can fire them all behind your kart – very useful when used in conjunction with the course map on the lower screen, which shows the location of other racers and items. During an eight-player match we actually managed to avoid several incoming green shells purely by use of the map, so it's more than a cosmetic addition to the game.

The wireless multiplayer mode works a treat. The final version will have a pre-race lobby where players can wait until everyone is ready to start, but in the demo you're just thrown straight into the action after a minute or so. Regardless of the early state of the version we played, the connection was flawless and the framerate never dropped. Because of the graphical detail in the tracks (it's considerably nicer looking than the N64 game) all eight players are likely to need a cartridge.

> **"ONLINE MULTIPLAYER RACES AND CLASSIC SNES TRACKS REDONE IN 3D. TEMPTED?"**

Online play is currently limited to four players, which at least gives you a better chance of winning. We can't imagine many




△ Unlike the N64 version, all the karts are made from *real* polygons!




△ You'll see characters taunt and wave when you watch the replay.

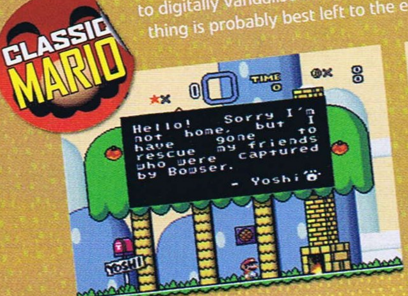
SUPER MARIO WORLD
SNES – 1990

The third of four Mario titles to be universally acclaimed as the Best Thing Ever. So high was Nintendo's confidence in *Super Mario World*'s must-have appeal, the only way to play the game was to splash out on the brand new SNES console it came bundled with initially. Around 17 million people did so.

Fifteen years on, it's one of the most iconic games of all time. A single sprite, a snippet of background graphics or the first four notes of the theme tune would be more than enough for any Nintendo fan to identify it.

Some people loved *Super Mario World* so much, they spent years creating tools to customise the game. We spent half an hour using one of these tools to digitally vandalise the Mushroom Kingdom, before deciding this sort of thing is probably best left to the experts.

CLASSIC MARIO







△ The best items and turbo patches are located on the inside of the course, where it's very easy to fall off.

people getting to experience the magic of a fully populated eight-player LAN match on a regular basis, so it's a shame the online service won't quite be a substitute for seven DS-owning mates. But to criticise *Mario Kart DS*, with its 30+ tracks, sublime handling and super-slick graphics, seems petty and rude. Bring it on!

QIX
GB – 1990

Qix is a puzzle/action game where you capture areas of the screen by drawing boxes around abstract baddies. All good stuff – in fact it was an arcade classic long before Nintendo brought it to Game Boy.

Which is why the ending screens are a complete mystery. Get a high enough score and you'll see Mario dressed as an assortment of ethnic stereotypes. One moment, you're painting what should be coloured boxes on the Game Boy's yellowy-green screen; the next, Mario has greased up his quiff and is fighting bulls in front of a line of flamenco dancers.

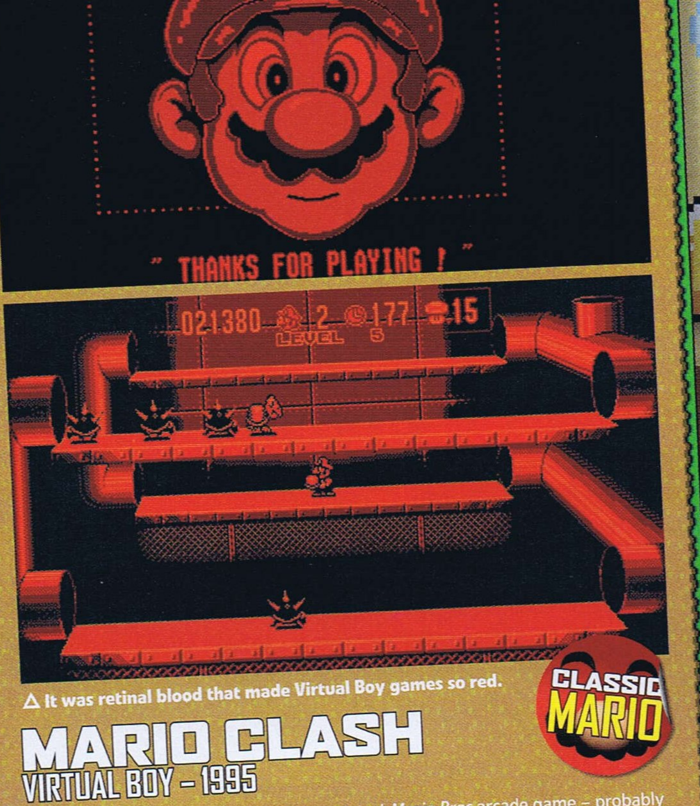
Then he's sporting a turban and charming snakes in front of the Taj Mahal. Look! He's wearing a sombrero, playing mariachi guitar to a cactus plant. And now – say it isn't true – he's carrying a spear and dressed in a loincloth, hunting elephants in Africa. And yes, Nintendo really did 'black him up' for that one.

△ On a DS screen, this looks incredibly crisp and smooth. You don't notice the lack of texture-filtering at all.

△ This new track has a bit of haunted mansion, a bit of a Banshee Boardwalk type of thing, and a swamp with walking trees. It's the biggest one we saw.

△ The fly-past at the start of each race shows some graphical muscle.

△ This is an excellent track, but we still haven't seen Wario Stadium…



△ It was retinal blood that made Virtual Boy games so red.

CLASSIC MARIO

MARIO CLASH
VIRTUAL BOY – 1995

Somebody at Nintendo really loves the original *Mario Bros* arcade game – probably nice Mr Yamauchi's accountant. Not so long ago, *Mario Bros* was recycled into the multiplayer portion of *Mario Advance* for the GBA. Then it formed the multiplayer portion of *Mario Advance 2*. More recently, the game cropped up as the multiplayer portion of *Mario Advance 3*.

Ten years ago it was adapted for the retina-burning Virtual Boy console – a machine that generated incredible 3D images by stabbing little red needles into its users' eyes. 3D being the Virtual Boy's only selling point, *Mario Clash* involved hopping between foreground and background areas. This impressive effect would be accompanied by a muffled 'wow' from the player, marvelling at the space-age visuals from within the console's sweaty face-shroud.



△ Two-player action is one of the big features of the game. You can battle with your brother or team up to play the normal levels, which is an excellent addition to the series. It's all wireless, and some of it works with one cartridge.

△ These platforms wobble and sway, bringing the backgrounds to life. The game looks fantastic.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS

Retro action with modern looks

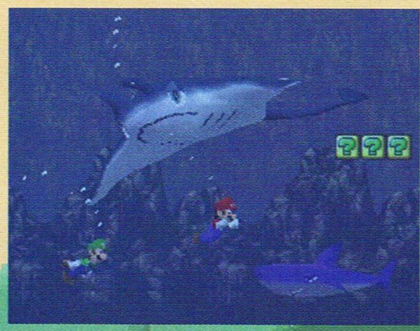
Any lingering doubts we had about the unholy combination of 3D graphics and 2D gameplay were thoroughly dispelled by a second chance to experience this brand new platformer, away from the stinking crowds of E3.

Quite simply, it's amazing – and far better suited to the DS than a conversion of *Mario 64* could ever be. Having said that, it's very much a D-pad and buttons affair, but it's quite refreshing to see a game that doesn't make a gratuitous use of the DS's special features. The touch-screen is only used for accessing stored power-ups, and when you're in an underground level, where these items aren't available, the action switches from upper to lower screen, so you're not tempted to prod at ghosted icons.

As ever, the game looks much better on the DS screen than in static shots. The movement is beautiful, and objects such as pipes and platforms often have sneaky little animations. Some pipes bend to shoot Mario into the air, on a coin-collecting flight.

> "QUITE SIMPLY, IT'S AMAZING – AND FAR BETTER SUITED TO THE DS THAN MARIO 64"

We only saw one new power-up, which was a mushroom so big it took three hits to squeeze it out of its item block. Eating this quivering fungus made Mario expand to almost the height of the screen, for a battle with a giant Goomba boss. Naturally, you don't just return to normal – the remainder of the level is spent charging through an array of smashable blocks as enemies flee before Mario's size-200s.



△ They could probably do with adding some more familiar underwater Mushroom Kingdom foes.

△ Looks like somebody swiped the giant mushroom before Luigi could get there. Now the lean green plumbing machine must bow to his brother's every whim. For 15 seconds.

△ A healthy bit of brotherly competition for coins and treasure.

Jumping three times while running makes Mario do an extra-springy spinning leap, rather like in *Mario 64*, and everyone who met Yoshi after collecting 120 stars in the N64 classic will appreciate the special jump you get when you pick up a power star.

Amid all these side-projects and spin-offs, it's fantastic to see Mario back in the Goomba-stomping role that made him the world's favourite game character in the first place. It has been far too long.

TASH FACTOR

△ Giant Mario smashes through anything in his path. We like this bit. We like it a lot.

CLASSIC MARIO

SUPER MARIO KART
SNES – 1992

While the mere sight of the title screen is enough to send us into a misty-eyed dreamland of multiplayer sessions gone by (and you don't want to know what the sound of tyres screeching on a Ghost Valley track does to us) we have a duty to remove our rose-tinted specs for just a moment.

As the creator of its own genre, *Super Mario Kart* is directly responsible for every diabolical kart racer ever to squeeze through the bowels of an imagination-starved software company. If Nintendo had patented the concept of combining go-karts, comedy weapons and famous characters, we wouldn't have had to watch in disgust as everybody from Mickey Mouse to the Muppets drove their turd-fuelled vehicles straight through Nintendo HQ, grabbing anything they could lay their hands on. It's all Mario's fault.

△ Holding Y and A at the character selection screen made your karter shrink.



△ Persistent fouling gives the opposition power-up items.


△ This must be the 'Cambodia 1977' pitch. How very Nintendo.


△ There's a circular 'swing meter' thing immediately before a special shot is unleashed.

SUPER MARIO STRIKERS

Meet Italy's new football hero.

Having watched his trusty team of Toads take some outrageous kickings from Donkey Kong's swarthy horde of Koopas, Mario is angry – and he's got the maxed-out power shot meter to prove it.

Collecting a pass on the edge of the DK penalty area, Mario spies an opportunity. The Kremling keeper is on his line, behind three defenders, but when you can shoot like Mario is about to, anything is an opportunity.

He flicks the ball 20 feet into the air, sending the game into slow motion, and launches himself skywards. A golf-style swing meter pops up to test our hero's timing. Unfazed, he hits the sweet spot and the camera zooms into his eyes. A fireball symbol materialises in front of him, he lashes out with his left foot and the game returns to normal speed – just in time to see the Kremling blasted into the back of his own net by a shot so hard it set the ball alight…

Yes, it's straight out of the movie Shaolin Soccer but it's done brilliantly well. What isn't so hot is the fact that there's only one 'proper' character per team. And if one of the minions scores, it's the team leader who celebrates.

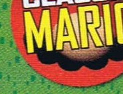
There's still a load of work to do on this one, and very little time for the developers. On the plus side, we like the non-stop nature of the games – the ball never goes out of play and there's a tit-for-tat system of fouls and power-ups instead of a ref. But we're a bit concerned about the stuttering action in this early version and, if anybody's listening, please, please, *please* don't force us to play with a bunch of identical Toads.

> "PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T FORCE US TO PLAY WITH A BUNCH OF TOADS"

TASH FACTOR



GOLF
NES – 1985



Playing this ancient sports sim 20 years on adds weight to the argument that retro games are actually rubbish unless you have fond memories of them from the first time around. We missed this one back in '85, and consequently it's exposed as incredibly difficult and stupendously unfriendly.

But that bloke hacking his tee shot half a pixel out of bounds, 17 times in a row, was supposed to be Mario. Back in the old days, he thought nothing of changing his outfit to suit his current activity – once upon a time he even wore skin-tight shorts and a manboob-enhancing polo shirt just to play tennis on the Virtual Boy.

Golf was recently resurrected in a much easier (and therefore more enjoyable) analogue format for *Wario Ware: Twisted!*.



DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION MARIO MIX

Funky moves with two left feet…

Dotted around these pages, you'll see several examples of Mario being pointlessly shoehorned into wholly inappropriate retro games. Here's one for the future.

It isn't that we don't like to see Mario extending his repertoire and bringing a bit of Mushroom Kingdom colour to drab pastimes, but Dance Dance Revolution is a well-established franchise with a hardcore following. We'd rather have seen a full-on Gamecube version than this, which will have limited appeal among DDR fans.

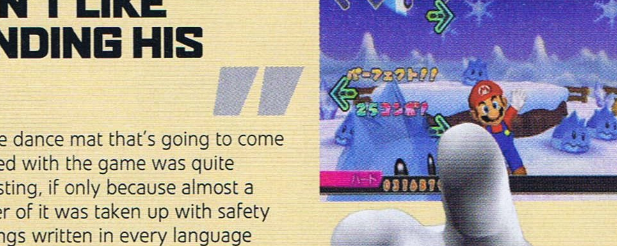
Anyway, there are no significant changes to the foot-tapping gameplay. The difficulty level isn't as hard as usual on the default settings, although we almost broke our ankles trying to keep up with it on the harder mode – we're not dancers. No DDR veteran is going to find this a serious challenge.

The music is mostly happy hardcore remixes of themes from various Nintendo games, and thankfully we didn't hear anything quite as disturbing as the techno version of Chim Chiminy from DDR's *Disney Mix* on Playstation. Mario breakdances in the background as the dance arrows scroll up the screen.

The dance mat that's going to come bundled with the game was quite interesting, if only because almost a quarter of it was taken up with safety warnings written in every language known to Nintendo. Did you know you're supposed to surround your dance area with cushions in case you fall? Do you care?

> **"IT ISN'T THAT WE DON'T LIKE TO SEE MARIO EXTENDING HIS REPERTOIRE, BUT..."**

TASH FACTOR



△ Catch the bananas, but make sure you don't fall onto your cushions!



△ The 3D backgrounds are the most detailed we've seen in a *DDR* title.

ALLEYWAY

GAME BOY – 1989

CLASSIC MARIO

In the old days, few games companies had the foresight to copyright their intellectual property – possibly because they were too busy plagiarising one another's ideas. If you wanted to make a home computer game, the standard practice was to visit an arcade, see what the kids were sticking their money into, then write a subtlely different version in your programming lab/bedroom.

Nintendo changed all that, thanks to the magic of © and the power of ™. Even when they were indulging in their own spot of old-school cloning – in this case based on Taito's *Arkanoid*, which in turn was based on Atari's futile and joyless *Breakout* – the addition of Mario made it a proper Nintendo title. Here, Mario jumps into the bat at the start of the game. And every few levels, the bricks are arranged in the shape of a *Super Mario Bros* sprite. That's all.



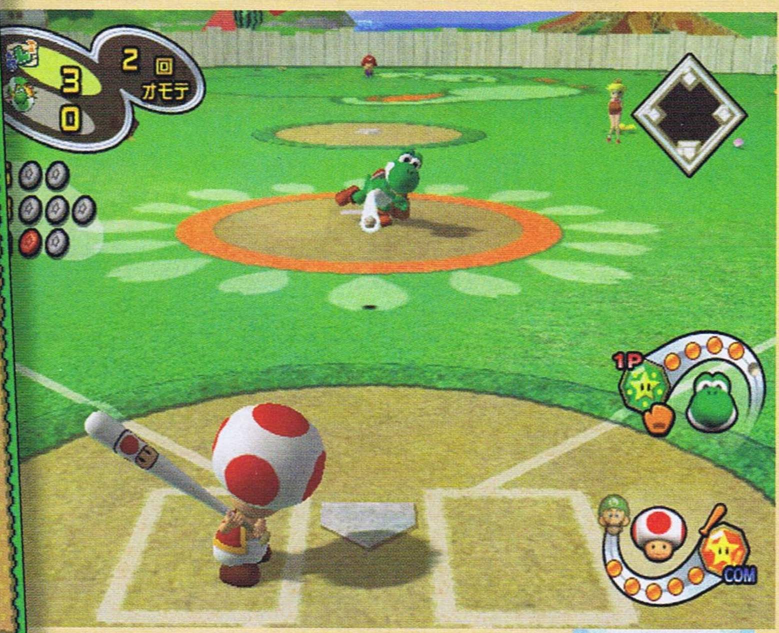
△ Get rid of her, Mario – royalty awaits.

CLASSIC MARIO

PINBALL
FAMICOM – 1983

When you're using an 8-bit games console to simulate the complicated physics involved in thrashing a steel ball around a rubber-lined box, accuracy is not an issue. Sticking Mario and his ex-girlfriend, Pauline from *Donkey Kong*, into the bonus stages will compensate for any lack of quality in the main game.

And so it proved, as Mario debased himself by carrying a piece of steel girder on his head, which he used to bash the ball at Pauline. Once the floor she was standing on had been completely destroyed, Mario stepped aside and watched her fall into the pit of spikes below – Nintendo's very first fatality.



△ This has a strangely 'next-gen' look to it – the graphics are noticeably crisper than most other Gamecube titles, and the animation is extremely smooth.

MARIO BASEBALL

Ghosts, mushrooms and plumbers in pyjamas.

The sporting theme will limit its appeal outside of Japan and the US, but there's actually no need to know anything about baseball in order to have fun with this game. We couldn't tell you the difference between an 'infield fly' and a 'quick return pitch' – frankly, it isn't the kind of information we ever want to retain.

***Another crack at Mario Baseball*, though…**

In spirit, it's very much like *Mario Tennis*. You can play most of it using just two buttons and the control stick – holding A charges up a swing if you're batting, or throws the ball when you're pitching. Pressing R at the same time unleashes a special shot or throw, with fiery results.

That's all that you need for a basic game, although there are other controls for setting up fielders and making players steal bases. Tapping B makes your fielder run when you have direct control over him.

To set up a game, you pick a captain from a list of 32 Nintendo characters – he'll be your main man, and there will be extra points at stake when he faces his rival. The other team members appear to be assigned by the computer. Unlike *Super Mario Strikers*, they're

> "SOME FANTASTIC VINTAGE CHARACTERS RENDERED AS BEAUTIFUL 3D MODELS"







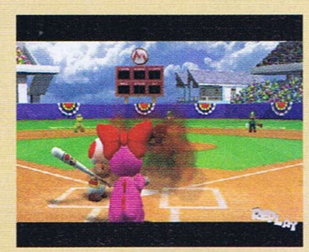
△ Diddy strikes out and Donkey laughs in his hideous face. At least the baseball cap is appropriate.

△ Fielding is tougher than batting. We didn't catch a single thing.



△ Donkey Kong doesn't use a bat – he just thumps the ball with his oversized boxing glove.





△ Hit the ball over the wall for some great special effects.



△ Nobody knows baseball in this country, but everyone loves Mario.

all different and include some fantastic vintage characters we've never seen rendered as beautiful 3D models. This is what a Mario sports game should be like.

We've also seen two minigames – one where you knock down barrels by hitting them with the ball, and the other is a home-run contest It somehow involves Bob-ombs that explode like fireworks when you smash them out of the stadium.

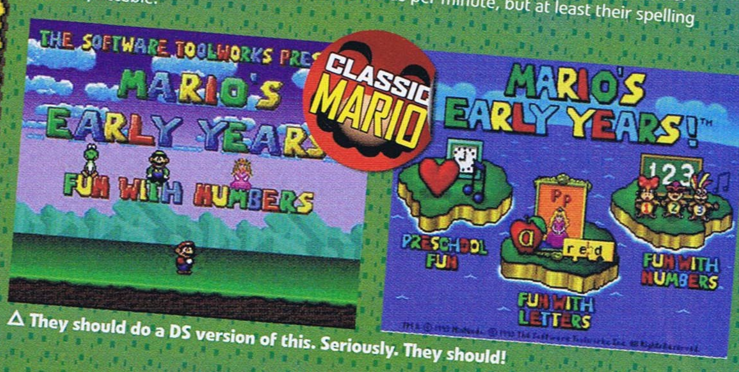
This really is going to be excellent, and if changing the name to Mario Rounders would help it take off in this country, then we're all for it. There are currently no plans to even release the game over here, although we're hopeful somebody at Nintendo will see sense…



MARIO'S EARLY YEARS
PC – 1994

Our hero was loaned to serious software house Mindscape and charged with bringing Sesame Street literacy to the under-fives. Three titles were produced in this series – *Fun With Letters*, *Fun With Numbers* and *Pre-School Fun*. So, lots of fun.

To ensure kids wouldn't grow up thinking that typing was an incredibly cumbersome process performed with a device as unsuited to the task as a SNES controller, the Early Years series was released on PC. Kids 'edutained' by Mario would later be taunted for their inability to type text messages at 60 words per minute, but at least their spelling was impeccable.



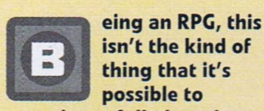
△ They should do a DS version of this. Seriously. They should!



MARIO & LUIGI 2

Four characters, one player…

Being an RPG, this isn't the kind of thing that it's possible to experience fully based on a demo. But we had a go at it anyway, and came away satisfied that it's going to be a very adequate DS sequel to the wonderful *Superstar Saga* for GBA.



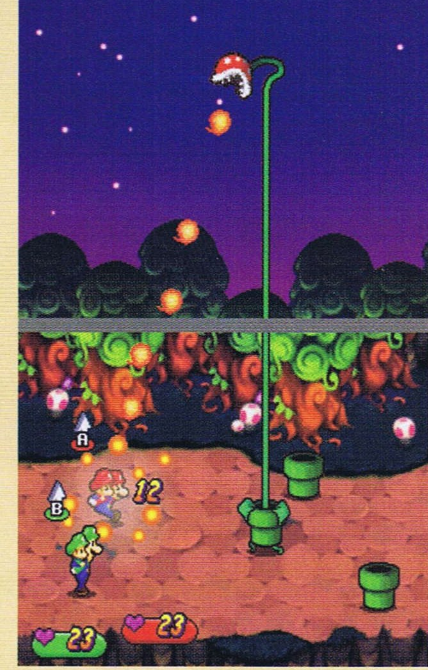
One puzzle that had us stumped (probably due to not knowing the moves) involved Mario and Luigi, plus their baby selves, all on the same screen. There was one button assigned to make each character jump, and tapping L switched D-pad control between the adult and infant pairs.

Poking and prodding produced some lovely screen-flipping effects and a handful of novel dual-screen puzzles, offering a glimpse of a title put together with real imagination. Then the demo stopped, we're sorry to say, but we'll have a full playtest just as soon as we can spend some serious time with the game.

TASH FACTOR







△ Some of the boss characters are two screens tall. You couldn't do this on a GBA…

MARIO PARTY 7

Where are you all going? The night is still young…

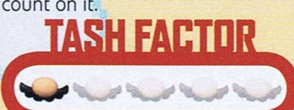
Arguably the least exciting of the new Mario games, mainly because we've seen it all before – six times. You certainly couldn't accuse Mario of being stingy when it comes to throwing a party.

Of course, this is the same old Mario Party with a few refinements to the rules and one new gimmick – eight-player minigames. These involve sharing the controllers between two separate players, so they're made up of simple button-tapping affairs such as skipping.

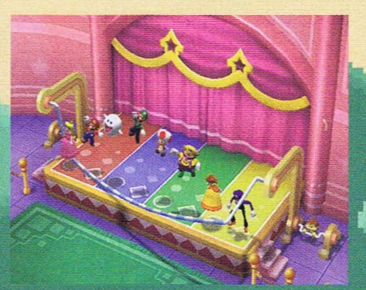


Basically, that's your lot. No doubt we'll notice something revolutionary, such as a brand new type of item, when we delve deeper into the board game mode. Maybe the developers will add a new character or two. But don't count on it.

TASH FACTOR







△ If only we knew enough Mario Party fans to have an eight-player game.

F-1 RACE
GAMEBOY – 1990

CLASSIC MARIO

Possibly not an official Formula One title, this popular four-player racing game featured tracks made from monochrome stripes – the only way the Game Boy's 4MHz processor could animate anything resembling a 3D road.

Mario wasn't mentioned in the title, nor was he pictured on the box. He wasn't even one of the drivers. But this being a time when using a Mario sprite anywhere was part of what defined a Nintendo game, the plumber popped up as a cheerleader, as did Toad, Luigi, Bowser, Donkey Kong and Peach. Next stop: *Super Mario Kart*.



MARIO TENNIS ADVANCE

Power shots in the palm of your hand

The developers at Camelot haven't strayed too far from their own successful formula for this fourth instalment of the simple-but-deep tennis series. It's the first handheld version to use exactly the same control scheme as the N64 and Gamecube editions, but that's only because the old Game Boy Color didn't have enough buttons.

The GBA's shoulder buttons mean you can now cancel a shot if you lock your character in the wrong place while charging up. Misjudging the perspective is a common problem on the small screen, so it's an essential feature to have.

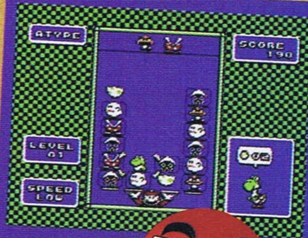
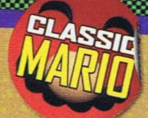
Power shots have been retained from the Gamecube version, although the demo was set at such an easy level, there seemed little point in having them. The playing area is so small and the ball movement so slow that to miss a shot you'd have to have been playing with your eyes closed.

We still haven't been able to play the RPG mode, which was the bulk of the game in the GBC version, or test out any of the potential Gamecube link-up features. But Camelot has proved to be a dependably superb developer for Nintendo so far, and we fully expect thumb-blisteringly addictive things from this.

> **"WE FULLY EXPECT THUMB-BLISTERINGLY ADDICITIVE THINGS FROM THIS."**

TASH FACTOR



MARIO & YOSHI
NES – 1991

It's easy to imagine *Dr Mario* with Boos and Goombas instead of vitamin pills and a nasty infection. In fact somebody at Nintendo must have had the exact same dream one sleepy lunchtime, and this is the result.

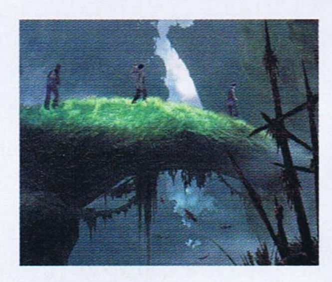
Giving it a slightly different title in every territory didn't make it a new game. Neither did incorporating cookies, adding Pokémon or sticking various versions into a puzzle compilation. But there's something nice and comforting about a game you can play without reading the instruction book, which is probably why *Mario & Yoshi* is now the template for all puzzle games. Or is that *Puyo Pop*?

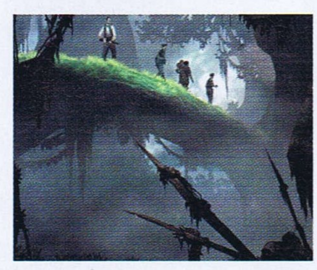


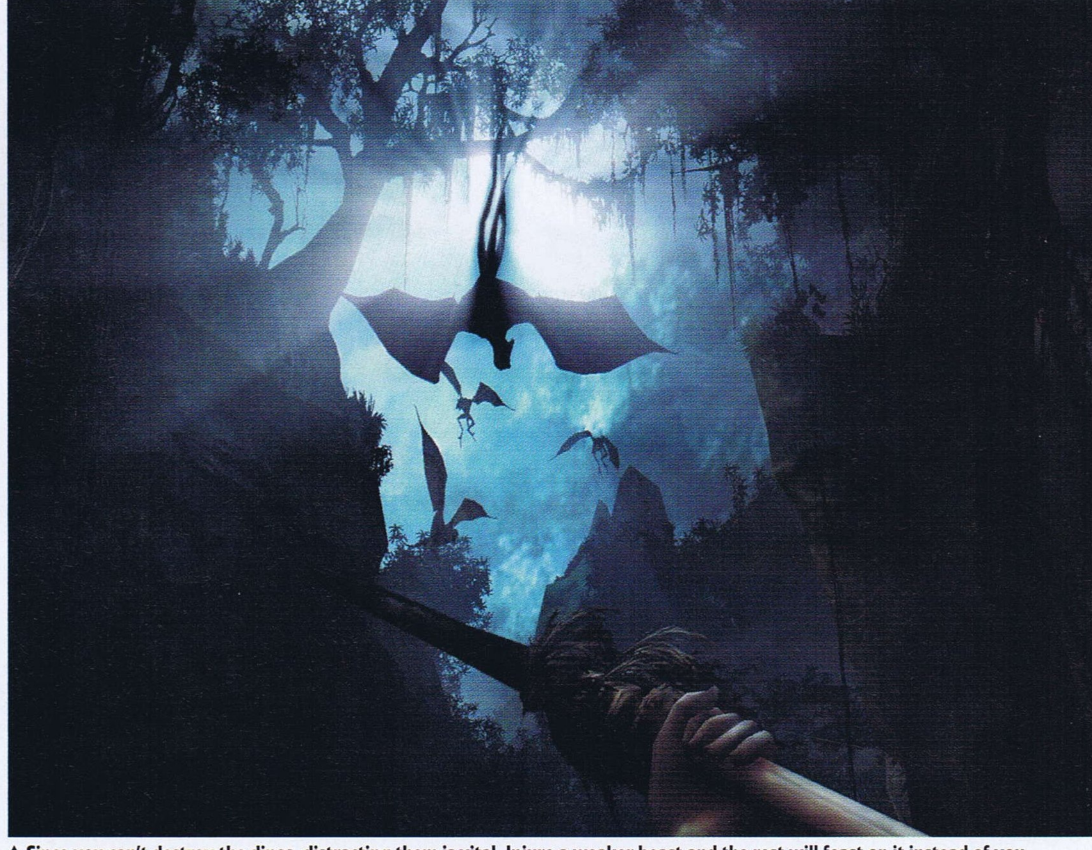
△ Mario's Flaming Cheathammer in all its portable glory.

BACKING BLACK
Jack Black, Adrian Brody and Naomi Watts will all lend their faces and voices to the game along with Andy Serkis, who, after playing Gollum in Lord Of The Rings, will provide the movements and motions of Kong.





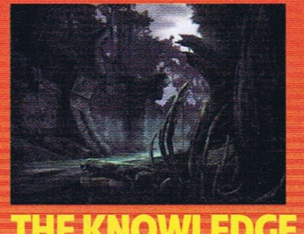




△ Since you can't destroy the dinos, distracting them is vital. Injure a weaker beast and the rest will feast on it instead of you.

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

The best monkey film since Dunston Checks In?



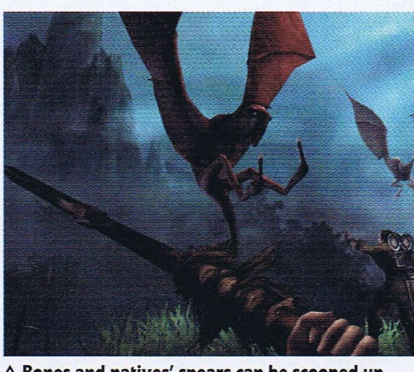
THE KNOWLEDGE

- Play as Jack Driscoll and King Kong himself.
- Models and backgrounds are taken from the movie's CGI.
- Play out moments from the film and see scenes not in the cinema.
- Battle against beasts not seen in the film.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Ubisoft Montpellier

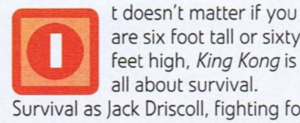
What have they done before?
Beyond Good and Evil (NGC/90, 86%)
A cinematic adventure that delights and surprises at almost every lovingly-planned turn.



△ Bones and natives' spears can be scooped up and used as ersatz weapons. Lovely.

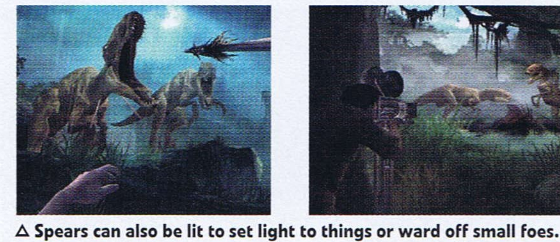
It doesn't matter if you are six foot tall or sixty feet high, *King Kong* is all about survival. Survival as Jack Driscoll, fighting for your life against the immense beasts of Skull Island, and survival as the monstrous and muscular Kong who, despite his size, is powerless against the high-tech and inhumane 21st century city.

When we first meet this odd couple, the advantage is very much with the sky-scrapping monkey, for Jack Driscoll is trapped on the island with a beautiful girl, a craggy-faced explorer and a fat camera-man.



> **"A GAME THAT HAS ALREADY TURNED EVEN HARDENED CYNICS INTO ZEALOTS"**

But instead of this being a tropical paradise, the rainforest has a wonderfully sinister air. Brilliantly fetid and dense, the undergrowth and fog seem to hide endless




△ Spears can also be lit to set light to things or ward off small foes.



△ The models are taken directly from the film's CGI sections.



△ The locations look lush.



△ These two evil-looking beasties will continue to fight each other. So long as you remain out of sight, that is…







△ Your team will help you, but they seem too interested in the creatures.



△ It's the scale of the jungle and all the beasts inside that impresses.



△ The T-Rex's motion, like Kong himself, is wonderfully fluid and limber.

dangers, while the gloom is highlighted only by occasional shafts of sunlight.

And this is an atmosphere unbroken by the conventional videogame furniture. There's no on-screen compass, no flashing arrows and no energy bar. Instead, a wobbling camera and crimson tint indicate when Driscoll has taken his first hit. And since you won't survive a second blow, it leaves you on edge and builds up the oppressive atmosphere.

Literally at the opposite end of the scale is Kong himself. Being the largest beast on the island, he lumbers in a third primate perspective above the same trees that tower so forebodingly over Driscoll, while also being able to tear the T-Rex that stalked the feeble foursome apart.

But even the regal simian has a weakness – love. As anyone who's seen the original movie will know, Kong cares about the girl. So as the game develops, he has to divide his time between protecting her and going ape on his foes, which should add an interesting contrast to a game that, even at this early stage, has already turned even hardened cynics into zealots. Ⓝ

NGC VERDICT



There are still many questions to be asked of *Kong*, such as how the city sections work, how is the transition from human to ape handled and how many of the on-rails set-piece sections will there be? But so far this is one spin-off is shaping up wonderfully. It looks and sounds spectacular while retaining the sophistication, boldness and charm that Michel Ancel first showed in *BG&E*.

ANTICIPATION RATING





PUNY HUMANS

It's common practice to get proper comic writers in to do the business these days, but Hulk boasts the winning combination of Hellblazer scribe Paul Jenkins and Ultimates pen-man Bryan Hitch.



△ You can lock on to enemies.

△ The city is just one of two environments in the game, the other is the desert Badlands.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Unstoppable force meets easily-stoppable humans – that's hardly fair, is it?

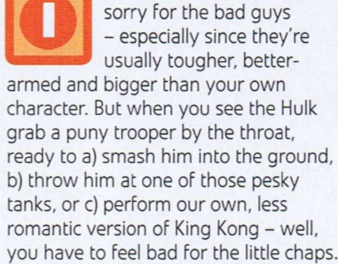
It's not often that you feel sorry for the bad guys – especially since they're usually tougher, better-armed and bigger than your own character. But when you see the Hulk grab a puny trooper by the throat, ready to a) smash him into the ground, b) throw him at one of those pesky tanks, or c) perform our own, less romantic version of King Kong – well, you have to feel bad for the little chaps. Forget what your mum always said about picking on someone your own size – beating up people smaller than you is *great*.

Anyone who's played *Spider-Man 2* will be pretty familiar with the idea of *Ultimate Destruction* – a massive, free-roaming city lets Hulk bounce around to his heart's content, smashing stuff until you feel like trying a story mission. The linear structure and the stealth-based Bruce Banner missions have been ditched since the last game, leaving new developers Radical Games free to concentrate on the smashing. And the smashing is good.

For a start, it's easy to get around. Of course, there's rarely any congestion trouble when you're a rampaging green beast – cars screech out of your way and most objects simply explode or fall over when Hulk charges through them – but Hulk's also able to pull off Spidey-style charged leaps and run up walls. He can still punch, grapple and throw things, of course, but the real treat's the ability to 'weaponize' certain bits of scenery. Pick up a car, for instance, and Hulk can rip it in half, then use it to make himself a pair of giant metal boxing gloves to protect his baby-soft mitts. Bigger vehicles, like buses, can be weaponised into shields, battering rams or even a sort of impromptu skateboard. Hulk can't kickflip, though.

The big question about all this is how repetitive is it going to get? There's a sensible concentration on smashing, but that could make the story levels feel slightly samey – you're either defending things, racing to things or hitting things until they explode. We've been using the game as a city-sized stress-ball – simply waiting until we're really upset and then causing a swathe of havoc and damage until the army gets called in and we're forced to make a dramatic, Kong-style last stand on a big building. Even in this game, you get over feeling sorry for the bad guys surprisingly quickly. Pedestrians, though – that's another matter…

> "ANYONE WHO'S PLAYER SPIDER-MAN 2 WILL BE PRETTY FAMILIAR WITH ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION"



△ Smashing up bad guys is great fun, but what about pedestrians?



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **More than 30 story missions, including battles against Marvel villains like The Abomination and Mercy.**
- **There's a massive array of Hulk moves, including 'weaponizing' pieces of scenery.**
- **More than 40 side missions, including races and timed smashing challenges.**

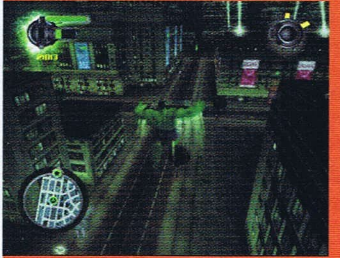
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Vivendi Universal

What have they done before?
The Simpsons Hit And Run (NGC/87 80%)
The Best Simpsons Game Ever. It's a bit like GTA Springfield.

HULKING OUT

Forget your punch-punch-kick combos – Hulk's got a whole city to go pant-ripping bananas in, and simply slapping some lampposts over isn't going to cut it. Here's our guide to causing some real property damage.



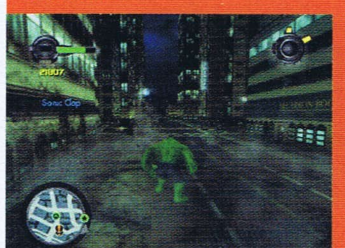
HULK JUMP!

The longer you hold the button down, the further Hulk will leap, and just landing on some of the weaker enemies can be enough to finish them off for good.



HULK PUNCH!

Realistically, why does The Incredible Hulk even need combos? One punch should usually be enough to send whatever he connects with some distance over the horizon.



HULK CLAP!

Even a simple game of pat-a-cake can turn lethal when The Incredible Hulk's involved, as a simple handclap transforms into a window-shattering sonic wave.



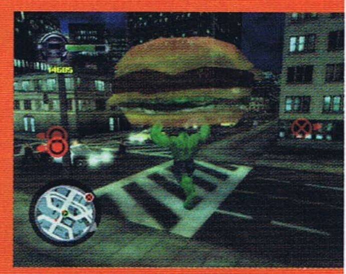
HULK THROW!

Charging throws makes them more effective – and once he's locked on, he will throw the projectile, and will automatically compensate for the target's trajectory. Nice.



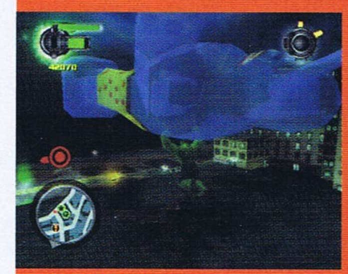
HULK DEFY GRAVITY!

Yes, we're well aware that running up walls defies the laws of physics, but here we're doing it while *carrying a car above our head*. Are there any more questions?



HULK BOWL!

No, even Hulk isn't stupid enough to try eating a giant hamburger sign – instead, he simply turns it into a massive bowling ball to and plays skittles with puny humans.



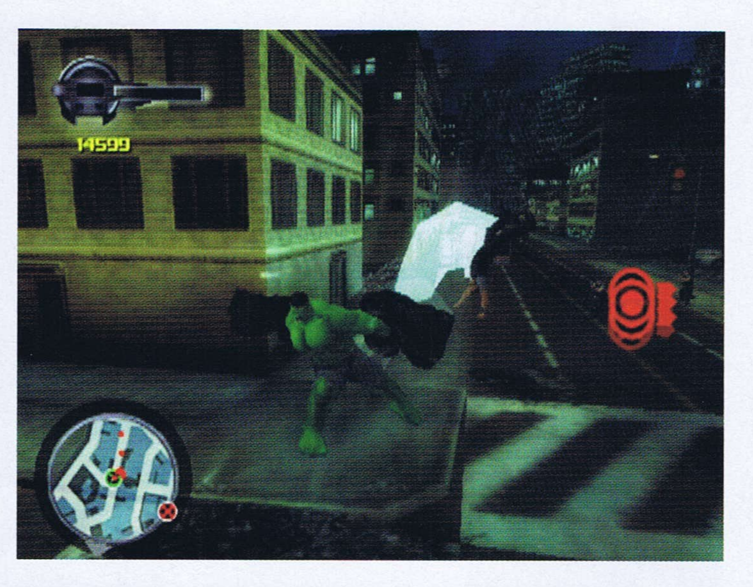
HULK FLOAT!

If you grab one of the inflatable mascots from the city rooftops, Hulk can then use it as his own personal hot air balloon. This takes strong arms, mind.



HULK PLAY DARTS!

Grab a missile launcher and Hulk will turn it into a weapon by ripping the sides off and using the fizzing rockets like monster javelins. Which comes in handy for helicopters.





△ Along with the smash-able environment, you can use parts of it as weapons.



△ Destruction: a lot of fun.



△ The pop-up looks okay.



△ Tanks? How feeble...

NGC VERDICT

UK 26 AUG | US AUGUST | JAPAN TBA



Roargh! The go-anywhere, smash-anything dynamic is an excellent touch, and there are some real treats in the animation – the way a Hulk-plummet grinds to a halt when he plunges his fists into a wall, for instance. Our only reservation is that it could get a bit samey unless we're constantly bombarded with new, improved ways to smash things.

ANTICIPATION RATING






4





△ *BRO* looks very sharp. These shots aren't PC rendered!



△ The soldiers on both sides call to each other constantly in their own languages, which adds to the atmosphere.



△ The complete lack of breaks for loading screens allows the anarchy of combat to unfold smoothly.



△ Run and gun gameplay's the order of the day, so don't expect to get bogged down with tactics.

CALL OF DUTY 2 THE BIG RED ONE

It sounds like a charity event, but there's no comedy in the trenches.

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Play as the longest serving US unit, the 1st Infantry Division.
- It isn't all about the Nazis you know, you'll also fight against Vichy French troops in North Africa and Italians in Sicily.
- Drive all manner of war machines, including tanks, Jeeps, half-tracks and bombers.
- Split-screen multiplayer action.



With *MOH: European Assault* proving to be as brief and unsatisfactory as a box of indoor fireworks (see page 80), anyone looking for a bigger bang should fix their sights on the new Call Of Duty. Because as we recently revealed (**NGC** 107), *The Big Red One* sticks with one US Army division living, and mostly dying during three years of the war in France, Italy, North Africa and Germany.

The key to this platoon of pals comes from the much improved facial modelling and animation, which manages to be both convincing and gruff. So instead of the disparate and disjointed story of *Finest Hour*, you can become attached to your squad as they're attacked, and bond as the grunts are bombed.

The NPC communication and squad-commanding element of the game has also been improved with the transplanting of the PC system of hand signals and oral orders known as battle language.

Along with twanging your heartstrings like an offal banjo, *The Big Red One* also masterminds numerous dramatic twists and turns through the now familiar mixture of all-action set-piece skirmishes and furious mass battles. And punctuating the infantry love-ins will be the usual mixture of vehicular violence, with jeeps, half-tracks and even some time spent as the tail-gunner in a B24 Liberator bomber.

Developers Gray Matter have harnessed much of their PC work and have converted the technology and textures of their sublime PC expansion pack to ensure a far greater level of credibility and scale to the battles, as well as detail on the tanks and troopers. All of which should ensure that *The Big Red One* will burn brightly this winter.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?

Gray Matter

What have they done before?

Call Of Duty: United Offensive (PC)
A better looking expansion pack for the original *COD* on PC.
Return To Castle Wolfenstein (PC)

NGC VERDICT





Finest Hour didn't quite replicate the PC experience, but *The Big Red One* should come much closer. Each encounter feels more spontaneous, more organic, less structured or scripted and every battlefield looks almost overwhelming due to the sheer numbers and detail of the on-screen soldiers. If only they'd reveal more about the multiplayer modes…

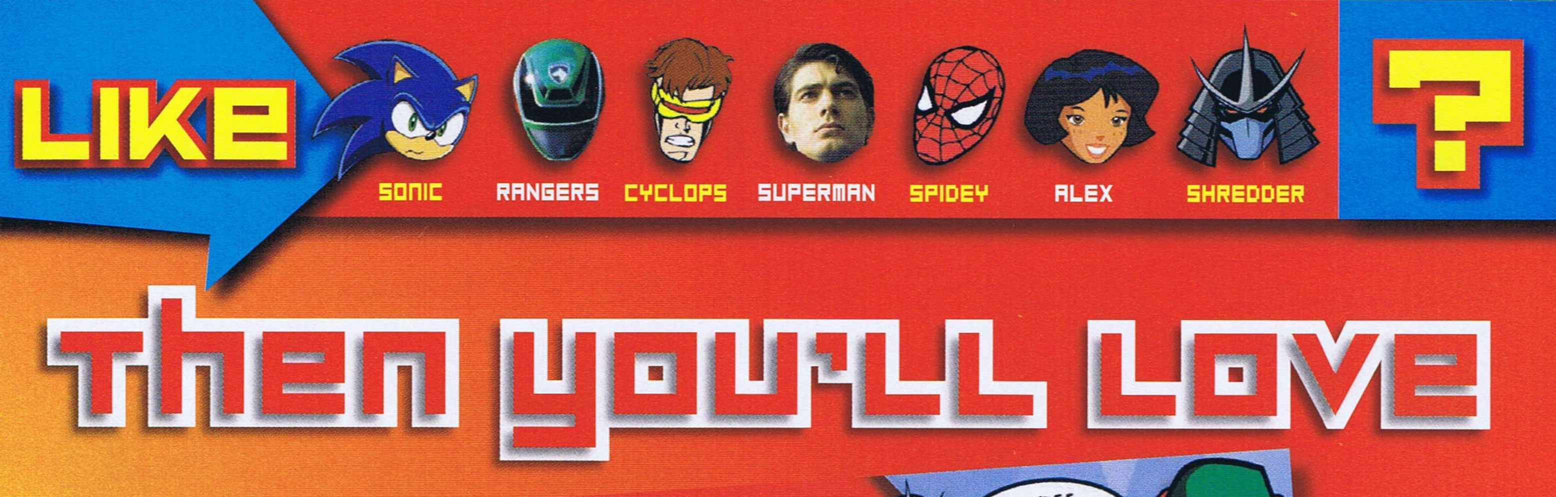
ANTICIPATION RATING



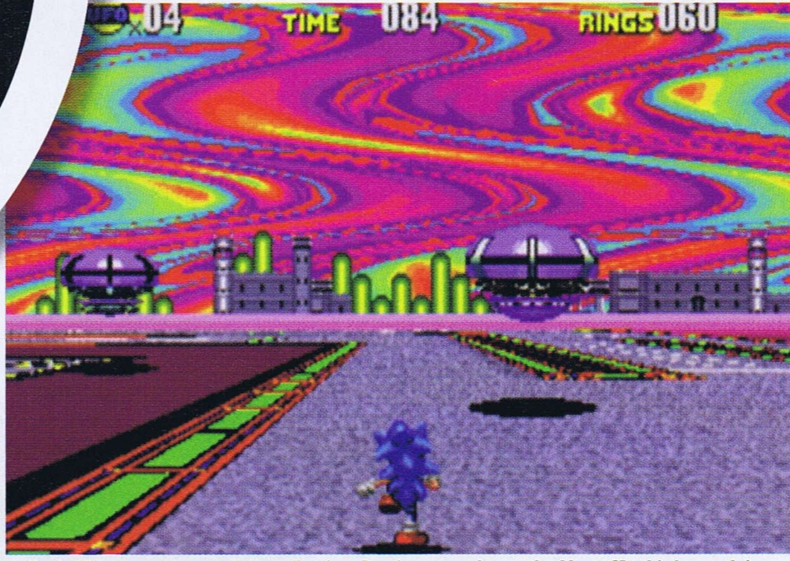







LIKE
SONIC
RANGERS
CYCLOPS
SUPERMAN
SPIDEY
ALEX
SHREDDER
?

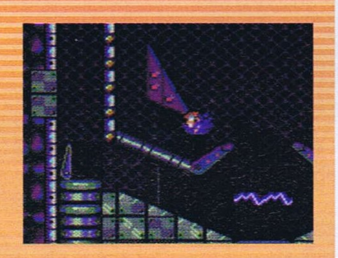




△ *Sonic CD* is the real gem of the collection. Passing many by on the Mega CD, this is worth it.


△ The two-player version of *Sonic R* still holds its own.

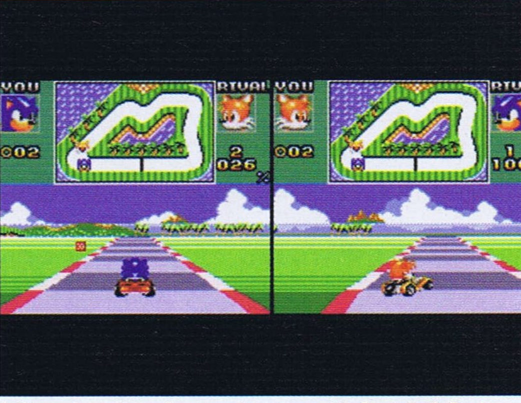

△ Don't worry, the only 3D you'll see is of the pseudo kind.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Consists of three Sonic games in their entirety, modified slightly for the Gamecube.
- There are also six unlockable Sega Game Gear games.
- A stash of Sonic artwork, sounds, manuals and songs in the Museum.
- A price tag of a measly £20.


△ *Sonic R* still cracks along at one hell of a pace, despite its age.


△ If you don't fancy feet, try it in a car with *Sonic Drift Racing*.



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Sega

What have they done before?
Sonic Mega Collection (NGC/79 70%)
Painfully accurate recreation of all the landmark games.

SONIC GEMS

Buy nine hedgehogs for a pony and get a fiver change.

If you've spent the last two decades on Mars, in a cave, in the dark, with your fingers in your ears, going "la la la la la" and so don't understand the cultural typhoon that is Sonic the Hedgehog, then this is your chance to catch up.

For just £20, *Sonic Gems Collection* will, like the *Mega Collection* before it, plug the gaps in your knowledge, while also allowing you to delve deeper into the murky past of this little blue scamp, who has appeared on more retro platforms than the Scissor Sisters.

At the heart of the beast are three old school games: the Saturn-gracing *Sonic R*, the obscure arcade-only *Sonic: The Fighters*, and the fans' lauded and lamented *Sonic CD*. Of course, all three games move with the grace and pace originally given to them by their source machines, but with controls that have been converted to match the Gamecube's superior pad. What's more, they are all surprisingly playable, with *Sonic CD* in particular revealing itself as a four time zone, seven world, 50 level epic that can still sparkle, but frustrates at times.

But the *Gems Collection* goes much deeper than simple stimulation, as the unlockable Museum section is filled with numerous soundtracks, manuals, movie clips and all manner of general goodness. And somewhere in-between all of this rose-tinted flotsam are six Game Gear titles, including *Tails' Adventures, Tails' Sky Patrol, Sonic Drift Racing, Sonic The Hedgehog: Triple Trouble, Sonic The Hedgehog 2* and *Sonic Spinball*.

And since all that ephemera comes with the kind of price tag that also seems to belong to a different age, there is only one question left to ask: after *Mega Collection* mopped up most of the games that mattered to anyone with less than stalker-like Sonic obsessions, just how big a market is this niche?

ALEX COOKE

NGC VERDICT

UK NOV | US NOV | JAPAN TBC



No doubt buoyed by the commercial success of the *Mega Collection*, this seems like a great idea for Sega and the Sonic worshipper, but unlike the last collection of games these titles aren't real headline grabbers, more hardcore delights. And while *Fighters* and *R* have novelty value, it is only the excellent *CD* that will entice those keen to relive the glory days of the spiked slider.







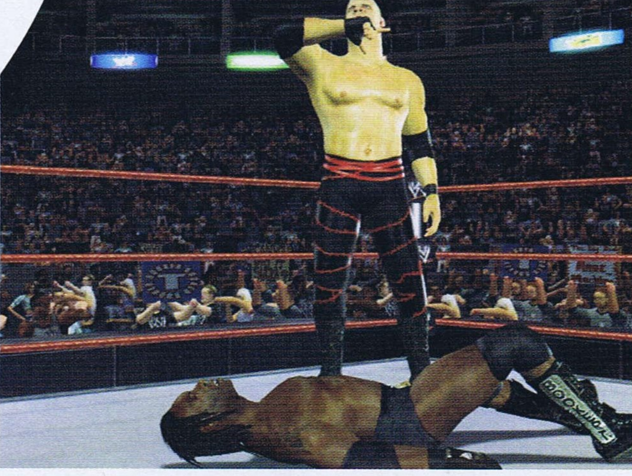





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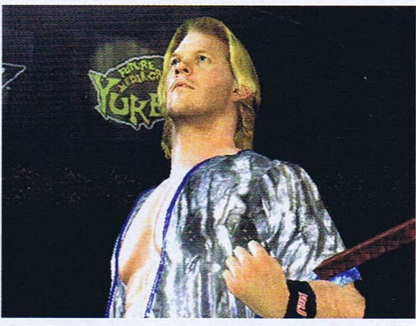
HOME FROM OLD PEOPLES' HOME

While the roster has revealed 42 of its fighters, the WWE Legends list is still being held closely to THQ's depilated chests. Although so far only Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and Mankind have been seen in motion.





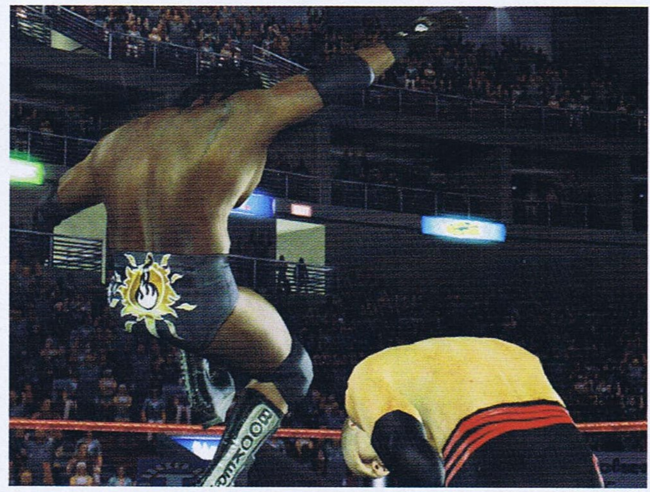
△ There is no spoken dialogue – just text, sadly.



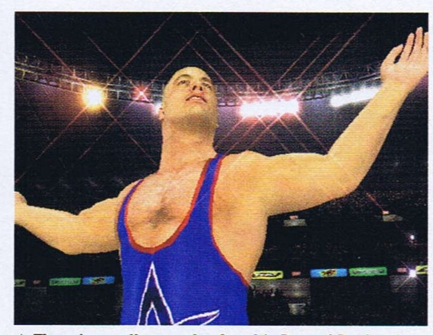
△ Sadly, you can't use custom wrestlers from *DOR*.

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Fight as forty different wrestlers, including Stacy Kiebler, Edge, Torrie Wilson and Paul London.
- Six Legends will also be revealed and added to the roster.
- 15 modes and events.
- There will be four to eight unique moves per wrestler.
- More detailed characters and a full 3D crowd.



△ There are three kinds of finishing moves; the bigger ones need more stamina.



△ There's an all new plot for this Day of Reckoning.

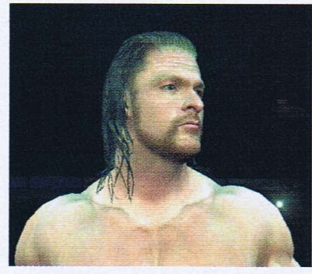
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Yukes

What have they done before?
WWE Day Of Reckoning
(NGC/98 74%)
Lacking ambition and sound, but not polish.

WWE DAY OF RECKONING 2

The lord of the rings returns…



△ The improved facial animations include changing expression.



Being repeatedly punched in the face hurts. But what seems to have been forgotten in the vast majority of wrestling games is that being repeatedly punched in the face is also tiring. Luckily, all that is about to change; Yukes have learnt their lesson.

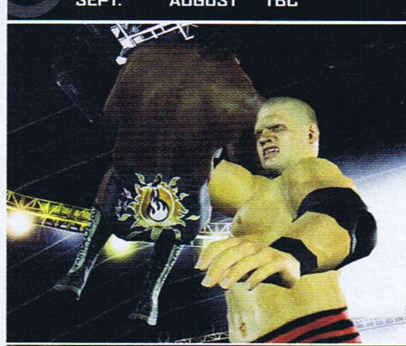
The key to the much-enhanced grappling is a stamina bar that dictates how your brawler responds to your commands. *Reckoning 2* drags the stamina bar into the centre of the action. Working in tandem with the C-stick driven submissions and more accurate location-based damage, the state of your wrestler not only decides how hard you can hit, but if you can at all. A tired grappler is so sluggish and slow that they can barely block or dodge an opponent's blows.

The 50 or so brawlers will also feature four fighter-specific choices of submission moves, from humiliating crowd pleasers to a special bar building Show-Off move or a stamina rebuilding Rest Submission. Breaking these holds depends on matching the move by shoving your stick in the same direction, which already feels far more intuitive and demanding than the original.

With 15 events, a greater degree of pre-show presentation and backstage shenanigans, it should also be a long time before anyone gets tired of *Reckoning 2*.

NGC VERDICT

UK SEPT. | US AUGUST | JAPAN TBC



With numerous visual improvements to match the mostly excellent combat system, *Reckoning 2* moves smoothly, grapples quickly and offers far more complexity than the slightly over-simplified original. So far, each fight feels like great fun, but there are still plenty of tweaks to be made to the basic balance of the brawls before it can really stake its claim.

ANTICIPATION RATING










△ So far, the Solo mode remains tightly under wraps.





△ This robot-armed chap is one of the new characters commissioned by EA, and he goes by the name of Brigade.

△ The arenas are interactive – anything from oil drums to cars can be used as weapons.

△ There's a variety of range attacks, as well. Such as Iron Man's repulsor rays and Spidey's webs.

MARVEL NEMESIS
RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

Welcome to a beat-'em-up with more freaks and ex-men than a Big Brother line-up.

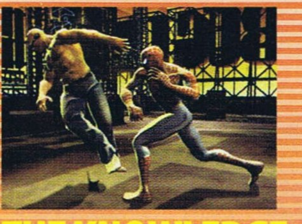
People may focus on the character-driven dialogue or the extended metaphor of mutants struggling to fit in in our prejudiced society, they may even study the skimpiness of Storm's costume, but comics are really about three things: the powers, the punch-ups and the quips.

Luckily, it's the first two factors that EA have opted to concentrate on in *Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects*. In a throwback to the Dreamcast's *Powerstone* or an open 3D version of *Super Smash Bros.*, a team of Marvel characters will be going head to head against a gang of EA-commissioned cartoon goons.

Using a simple control system that concentrates more on context-sensitive special moves than buffering and blocks, Spider-Man, Wolverine, Iron Man or anyone else from the still unconfirmed comic book cast can pick up parts of the scenery that litter the urban battlefields, lob them at a foe or rely on their unique mutant powers to blast, cast or swing along to rub them out. However, to increase the depth of action, these skills can also be used to enhance your dodges, leaps and straightforward slaps.

But no one's powers last forever, so you must manage three separate bars: Health, Mutant Power and Rage. While the first two bars are pretty obvious, it's the Rage bar that is the most interesting as it allows your chromosome-corrupted character to deploy a special finishing move or pull off a single, desperate come-back attack that hauls them back into the match.

With EA releasing the roster of radiation-powered renegades in a constant drip-feed of information, it is certain that we will see more of this Gamecube and DS-bound battler long before it squares up on our shores in November.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Released on Gamecube and DS.
- More than 12 fighters will be drawn from Marvel and EA's own seperate stables.
- EA's warriors are being created by comic book concept artists such as Jae Lee and Paul Catling.
- Destructible environments.

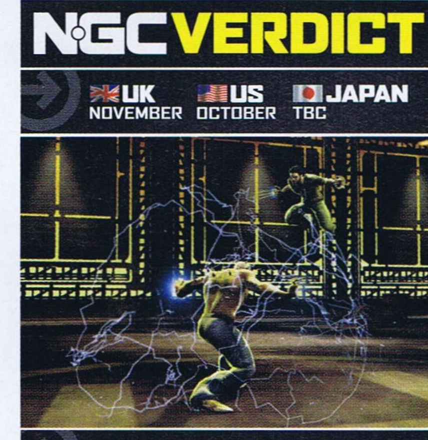
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Nihilistic Software

What have they done before?
Starcraft: Ghost (Gamecube)
Yet to be released

NGC VERDICT

UK	US	JAPAN
NOVEMBER	OCTOBER	TBC



With the less than glorious past of comic conversions, hope might have long ago moved into the basement, but *The Imperfects* is still promising. Sharp controls and nifty action mean that it should please first timers more than hardcore fighters, but there's still some balancing to be done between mutants' powers and the far too tough range-attacks.

ANTICIPATION RATING



2






JAMES BOND FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

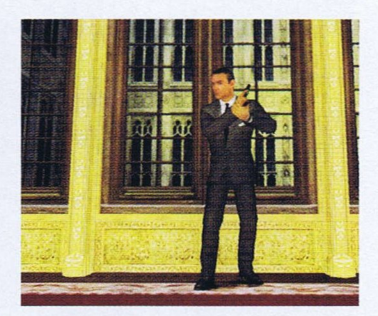
Ukraine your necks to see this Soviet shooter.

Putting even more distance between itself and the ghastly *Rogue Agent* by aping the same monkey-suited style as *Everything Or Nothing*, this trip into the Bond back catalogue has revealed even more about its mixture of heavy gun-play and stealth-'em-up action.

Using a very friendly target locking system, you can target an enemy and zoom in with just one press of the button. And if they don't see you, you can dispatch them with a silenced headshot, or aim low and trigger the grenades carelessly left hanging on their belts, in turn blasting their equally dozy mates into tiny little pieces.

While it's currently running on a newly developed engine at a locked 30 frames per second and promising a split-screen deathmatch mode, you can be sure that we'll have much more when Bond comes in from the cold this November.





△ Points can be exchanged to enhance Mr Bond's skills or his armoury





△ Along with the previously seen jet-pack, there are also car, boat and helicopter chases.

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

Jumping on board the Band-icoot wagon.

Platforming and karting have shared characters before, but now as never before the circuit is complete. *Crash Tag Team Racing* will combine both, and even add a little bumper grinding.

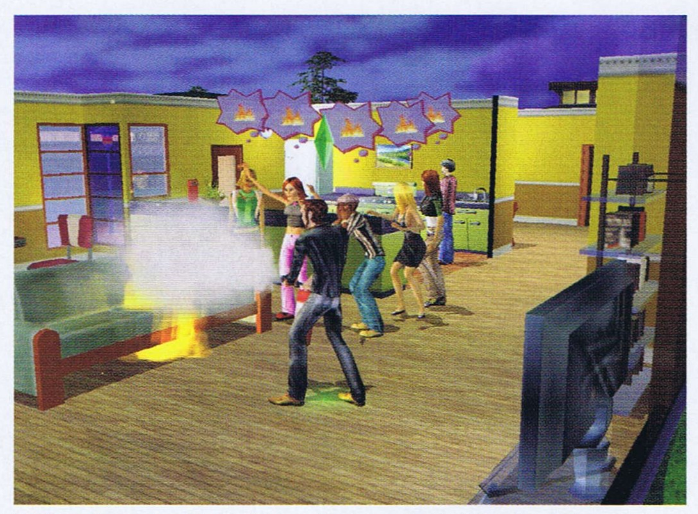
So in-between the familiar kart-style racing, there is also an exploring section, where you gather coins to power-up the vehicles and weapons of your choice. Once Crash has had his fill, the racing starts and another weird twist is added – you can ram into an opponent's kart and share the vehicle, with one animal driving and the other manning the gun. Even having played it, we still aren't quite sure why you would want to help your rival, but we will find out more as the autumnal release date nears.



△ You can combine cars by ramming each other.



△ The racing goes at a ludicrous, breakneck speed.


△ 25 brand new characters will roam the town, along with some old favourites.

THE SIMS 2

Feed them, water them, and then shame them…

Age will no longer wither them, but this conversion of Will Wright's second masterwork promises to add even more to these Sims' lives than just a freedom from wrinkles. Direct control is the main innovation, allowing you to steer the various small people around tricky bits of furniture so they don't end up stuck behind a desk lamp for three days, along with the ability to battle directly against a friend via the all-new two-player option.

Reading a rival's body language is now also vital, as your character's ability to make friends (or foes, depending on your own fragile morality) rests on your ability to match emotions with mates in the minigames. While *The Sims 2* doesn't look graphically up to PC standards at the moment, it may well be cleaned up and polished to a good shine ready for the 'just in time for Christmas' November release date.


△ There will be a new clothes designing minigame for this version.




△ The new view has enhanced the visuals, along with the movie star-based models.

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Your cup of tea or too hot to handle?

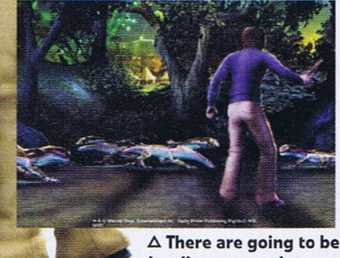


Sailing away from the sub-Zelda stylings of the previous Harry Potter games, *Goblet of Fire* is set to spit out a more action-driven adventure. The titular tyke and his chums will be able to co-operate with real friends and AI allies to lift up weapons and enemies alike and toss them off cliffs.

Other spells are similarly context sensitive, so the Jinx effect now provides new and interesting ways to end an enemy's life, depending on where, when and how many of you cast the spell. Your reward for the most stylish slaughtering will be the ability to upgrade your magician's kit and magical moves and spells.

Despite a framerate that is currently stuttering due to a yet-to-be optimised game engine, *Harry Potter and the Goblet Of Fire* should be able to conjure up something pretty special some time before November.


△ The Tri-Wizard Tournament levels will provide mini-games.


△ There are going to be hardly any puzzles.



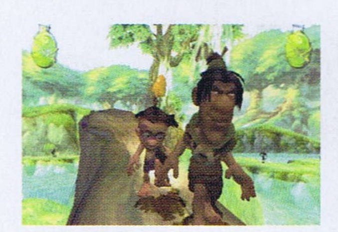
X-MEN LEGENDS 2 RISE OF APOCALYPSE

Fitting snugly into the same '*Gauntlet* with depth' category as the original, this promises enhanced four-player options, 16 playable mutants, 75 zones and 100 new enemies. With a new automatic levelling-up system, a refined interface and the mixture of the Brotherhood with the X-Men against a common foe, the list of moves and combos is huge and marvellously impressive. *X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse* will reveal itself in the autumn.

THE INCREDIBLES RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

Despite following on from the film, *Rise Of The Underminer* has discontinued the lame family 'fun' of the first game. Instead the screen is shared for numerous co-op cavortings as Mr Incredible and Frozone take on the titular foe. With the masked dolt dishing out the beatings and the Iceman-alike adding the puzzles, it's all looking good for a November release.



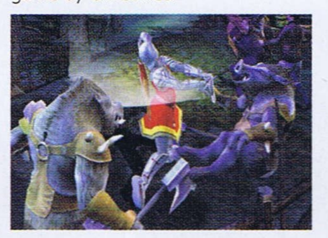


TAK THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

Despite being as fashionable as Alan Titchmarsh, *Tak* has always been consistent, and his third outing is already showing the same hallmarks, while also going in a new direction. Opting for a combative co-operative two-player approach instead of the usual ledge-leaping, Tak and the lumber Lok must beat the other villagers in a puzzle-driven race for the biggest prize the Jujus have ever awarded. *Tak* will be out early next year.

THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

Taking a *Two Towers*-style hack-and-slash approach to the tied-in film, this two-player scrolling scrap-fest should match EA's trilogy for both style and substance by offering unlockable bonuses and four interchangeable characters. Traveller's Tales, the makers of *Lego Star Wars*, hope to release the game by Christmas.





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SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY
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Pictoart gallery! All your best stylus scribblings!

WELCOME TO NGC POCKET…

I've actually been away on holiday for most of this issue – and while I was away I decided to make myself something of an ambassador for Nintendo's DS by stuffing it into the palms of everyone I know who doesn't ordinarily enjoy games, and I have to admit, my findings were rather interesting. Okay, maybe not *that* interesting, but certainly a little reassuring…

It's often been said that girls warm to the DS thanks to it's simpler interface (and no, that's not meant to be patronising in any way) and from what I've seen this is certainly true. I packed (among other things) *Electroplankton, Zoo Keeper, Nintendogs* and *Wario Ware* into my hand-luggage, and by the end of the holiday I grew pretty sick and tired of people asking me to play them, mainly because I had to re-charge my DS every single day I was away… It was also reassuring to see people who couldn't be bothered to play games actively seeking a few moments with the device and, more importantly, actively grinning when they played it.

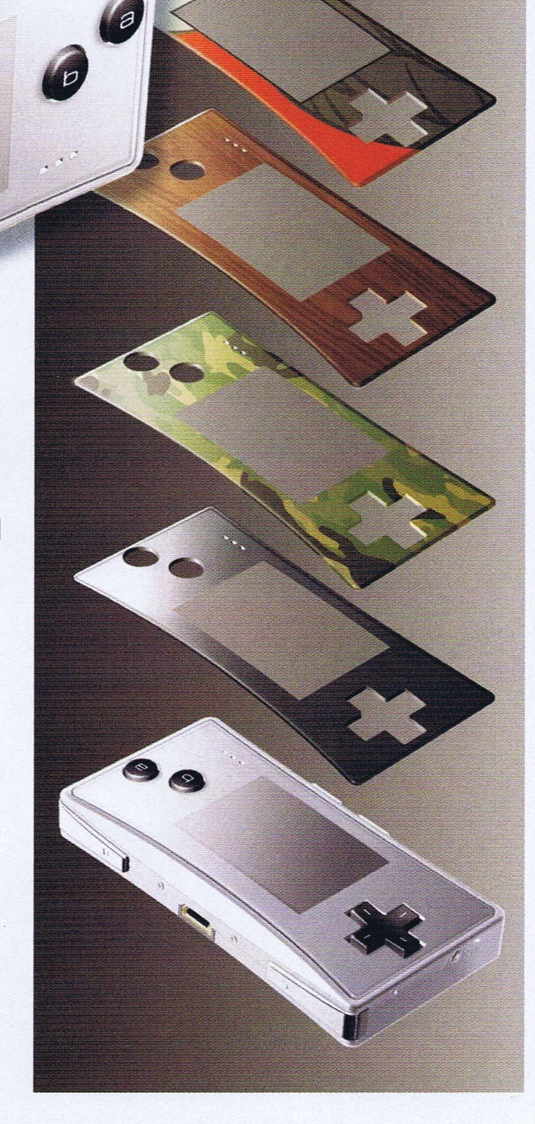
Without exception, everyone I would consider a 'non-gamer' made enquiries about its price and which of the games they played were available in the UK – many of whom are of retirement age…

We may often grumble about Nintendo making simpler, more casual games, but I think they may have a point…

Geraint Rhys Evans, Handyman



NGC POCKET, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Issue 8, August 2005
Editor: The Welsh Wonder
Contributors: Hippy bum layabout boy, Red 'em up Kittsy, The Blue Flash, The Norfolk Turkey



MICRO FACE OFF

Gameboy Micro reveals its clip-on colour range.

Despite being in danger of being crushed by passing atoms, the GB Micro has more features than a plastic surgeon's bin. And one of the neatest is the capacity to clip on new and interesting face-plates, just like the ones on a mobile phone. But unlike those tasteless cases for brain-cooking cells, these neat pieces can be easily attached to actually enhance the look of the new handheld.

At the moment, the full range of face-plate designs and colours is still to be decided, as is the price, although Nintendo expect them to be comparable in cost with phone accessories – so about £10 to £15. The GB Micro face-plates will be launched towards the end of the year, at the same to as the machine.

THE NEW PACK OF NINTENDOGS

The puppies' kennel gets an extension…

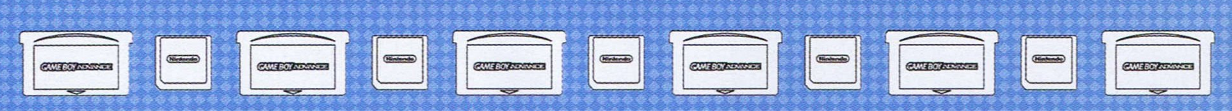
While we continue to paw the ground in anticipation of the October release of *Nintendogs*, US leaders can already start planning which dog in the twin windows they want to take home. For Nintendo have confirmed that three brand new breeds of mutt will be added to the game for its August release date.

And if you are planning to import this version across the pond, you'll be pleased to know that the three best breeds are the golden retriever, husky and boxer. They won't feature in just one pack, though, instead, they will be scattered through the three boxes of dogs:

Box 1: Labrador Retriever, Miniature Schnauzer, Toy Poodle, Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Miniature Pinscher and Shiba Inu.

Box 2: Chihuahua, German Shepherd, Boxer, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Yorkshire Terrier and Shetland Sheepdog.

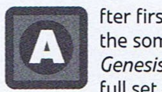
Box 3: Miniature Dachshund Edition also will have breeds like Golden Retriever, Beagle, Pug, Siberian Husky and Shih Tzu.





LUNAR GENESIS: ALL CRESCENT

The latest Lunar moons us with the first full screens.



After first appearing as a spacey RPG series on the somewhat unfortunate Sega Saturn, *Lunar Genesis* is finally ready to wax into view with a full set of news, screens and details. Developed by Marvelous Interactive (developers of the ever sublime and much-loved *Harvest Moon* series) and now published by Ubisoft, the series might follow on from *The Silver Star*, but the plot predates the original game by 1000 years. So the three teenage characters are a mixture of mildly magical human and powerful half-beasts, who happen to represent the two dominate species on Earth.

Starting in the city of Seirus, the trio travel by sliding the stylus across the screen and marking where you want to head on the map. The missions are picked up from Gado Express shops, which, like Wal-Mart, seem to spread throughout the world, meaning that wherever you go there will always be a shelf-full of side-tasks and mini-questions to undertake. *Lunar Genesis* will be harvested in Japan at the end of August and autumn in the UK.





△ It's entirely controlled by stylus.



△ The story is a kind of prequel to *Lunar Genesis*' predecessor.

EXCLUSIVE ENGRAVED DS GIVEAWAY



Win an extremely precious, special DS.

Rarer than a steak that is actually still wandering through fields chewing cud, and as limited as list-man Jimmy Carr's range facial expressions come these deliciously etched DSs. There are only 1000 in existence, but that hasn't stopped Nintendo kindly offering us an engraved DS to award to one of you.

There are just 200 each of the five editions in existence, and they come in: Pure White Mario, Platinum Silver Wario, Graphite Black Koopa, Candy Pink Peach and Turquoise Blue Yoshi. And if you fancy being one in a thousand, then all you have to do is answer the following question correctly.

In this month's NGC Pocket we reviewed *Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones*. What we want to know is: Gunpei Yokoi, who produced the early games in the series, didn't create which of the following consoles?

a) Game and Watch **b) DS** **c) Game Boy**

Answers on a postcard please to: I Demand A DS Because I'm Special Compo, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, BA1 2BW or email your answer to ngc@futurenet.co.uk. The first entry out of the 'hat' wins the DS.

NEWS WIRES

NO SO BURNT OUT?

Fair-weather fly-by-night friend *Burnout* might have left the Gamecube's warm fold with nary a tear in its cold eye (sorry, it still hurts…), but the chances of one of its smaller siblings sliding on the DS seem to be on the rise. While Electronic Arts are still officially denying the game's existence (come on, it's hardly Area 51…) it is believed that its development is being handled by a French studio, and that it will be overseen by the people at Criterion, who originally developed the game for Acclaim. At the moment the game is only scheduled to appear on the PSP in the autumn, but if there is more to this story, and it looks increasingly likely that there will be, we'll bring it to you very soon.

DS ON EVEREST

Yours may have survived 'trial by slobbering toddler' or defeated the 'long, bumpy journey in the bag, with keys' but few DSs will have endured -35 degree cold, and 29,035 feet climb. But two of the handhelds have. This is because two completely ordinary Dual Screens belonging to climbing nutjobs Neal Mueller and Chris Grubb have scaled the world's tallest mountain, Mount Everest. Sadly, an equipment failure prevented one of the climbers reaching the top of the peak known locally as Chomolungma but the both DSs fared very well, surviving the journey to the top and numerous frustrating two-player games of *Madden* on WiFi.

DIG DUG ON STRIKE

Namco are bringing out the old guard for DS. First Pac-Man returned, and now Dig Dug is set to make a comeback. In *Dig Dug Digging Strike*, Hori Susumu (that's Mr Driller to you and I), gets a call to to kill all the enemies that have turned up in the land, but Hori Taizou (that'll be Mr Driller's dad) takes the call instead and starts digging… and beating up bosses. You'll have a load of weapons, such as magnets, bombs and boxing gloves, and you can combine parts lying around the stages to create new weapons. If enemies have eaten food, the boss will be bigger, but it's all right as during 'Hori Susumu Time' you'll leap into a vehicle above ground and bury him underground. This will make cracks appear in the island and eventually the land will fall. *Digging Strike* supports WiFi connectivity and is out in Japan in August.



SONIC RUSH

From: SEGA

Gaining an extra dimension hasn't always been a blessing for Sonic. In 2D he was a slick Sega icon, whereas the move to 3D often left him bloated, cumbersome and looking lost. Which might explain why some people go into spasms of panic when they discover that in *Sonic Rush*, the spiked hero is fully rounded.

But while Sonic can spin around in a fully rendered roll, the world is in 2D. In our latest, exclusive playtest of *Sonic Rush*, at Sega HQ, we tried out the brand new corkscrew spirals and bungee swings that send the 'hog swooping outwards and it worked well. The map remains the traditional rollercoaster of ramps and loops, but there is one big difference – the size of each world. Gone are the wide-but-low levels of the early games, as this Sonic shoots ten storeys high into the blue sky.

Of course, this also makes use of the DS's dual screens to display more of Sonic's search for the blue emerald. And this new technology is used intelligently – when you start to climb a hill you'll be fixed on the bottom screen while the top screen warns of approaching dangers. Descents shift Sonic to the top screen to give you longer to spot those live-saving platforms. While having such a broad playing area seems intimidating as your eyes dart between the screens, it doesn't take long to become second nature.

However, some significant elements of *Rush* remain a mystery – Queen Blaze's half of the game, the minigames, and the four-player Battle mode are yet to debut. But what really impresses so far is the speed – significantly quicker than any of the previous generation of Game Boy titles and far better looking, *Rush* should be worth a spin.

△ **It's smoother, it's faster and it looks sharper than any other 2D *Sonic* game on any other system. All is looking well for *Sonic Rush*.**

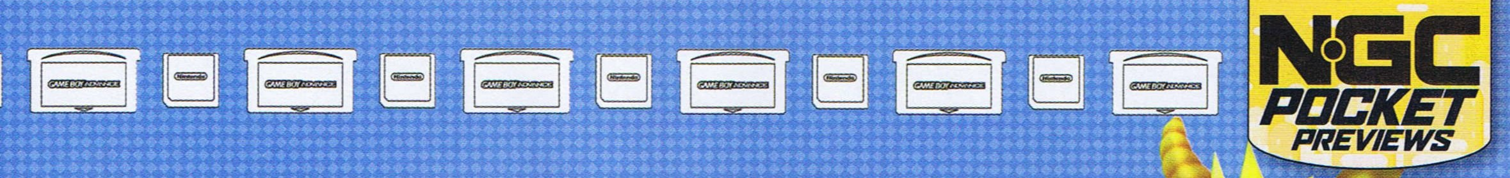


△ **These spirals show off how the 3D Sonic can be scaled and swing about.**



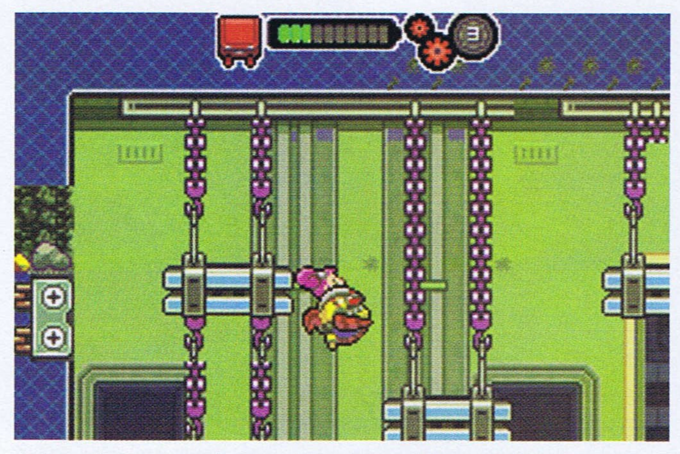
△ **The larger and taller levels are riddled with extra paths to explore.**

△ **As well as Sonic, the bosses are also modelled in 3D, and love to zoom in and out of the screen at you.**



SCREW BREAKER

From: NINTENDO Out: TBC



△ **It may be fun destroying everything, but you'll have to hold back.**

If you were a bit tired of creating cute little Pokémon, you'd probably fancy making a big action blaster featuring a fat, swearing meathead with bazookas for arms, but in Gamefreak's first break from the 'Mon, they've designed a game about tools. Drills and screws, to be precise. Boy, they can't get out much.

Still, as Mr Driller would have you know, drills can be fun and dangerous! *Screw Breaker* is a platformer which has you riding on the back of a robot, destroying walls and enemies with your drill. But while Mr Driller runs out of air, here you'll run out of power if you keep drilling, so you'll need to collect extra gears to increase your tool time.

It seems simple, but the strategy lies in knowing when to shift gears (using L and R) and what to drill. Everything is destructible, but you don't want to waste power destroying something you don't have to.

Throw in a rumble that's every bit as satisfying as *Wario Ware Twisted*, and this could be a surprise handheld hit.

SPYRO SHADOW LEGACY

From: VIVENDI
Out: OCTOBER



It's not often that we quote a press release, but Vivendi tell us that *Spyro Shadow Legacy* is to "introduce magic, martial arts and RPG elements." Martial arts! Sorry, but we're struggling to imagine the little purple dragon pulling off a 540 cyclone. Without laughing, that is.

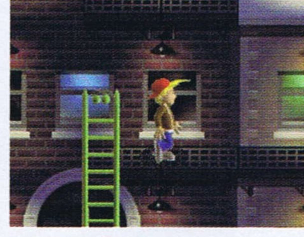
See, *Shadow Legacy* is going to be quite different from isometric GBA platformers, because when you deck enemies, the dragon will earn EXP and will be able to beef up his magical and martial arts powers. Okay it's not exactly *Final Fantasy*, but it'll make a change from simply freeing dragonflies.

But the good news is that Spyro, unlike other platform 'heroes' like Rayman, is making full use of the DS's technology. The spell system is well-done as you can draw symbols to cast magic on the touch-screen while the top screen is used as a map. Also, you can swap collectible creatures via WiFi.

And while we may chuckle at the martial arts, at least he hasn't – like every other platform character – got twin magnums.

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

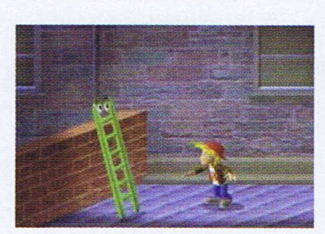
From: MAJESCO
Out: OCTOBER



△ **Feed the Blob beans and he will turn into a ladder. Obviously.**



△ **The Boy likes his pop music. We're not sure if he's a McFly fan.**



△ **Only the Boy and Blobert can stop the emperor of Blobonia.**

Blobert. From the looks of it, he's right up there with Globox from *Rayman* as one of the worst designed videogame characters ever – he is just a green, bogey-like blob. But as anyone who ever played the classic NES adventure will tell you, the blob has hidden talents.

Playing as the boy, you have to feed Blob jelly beans and he will turn into items to help you complete puzzles. Make him chew on a kiwi bean and the Blob will turn into a boxing glove, give him a liquorice bean and he'll convert into a ladder and best (or maybe worst) of all, feed him with a ketchup bean and he'll *catch up* with you. Jesus.

Of course, *A Boy and his Blob* has been slightly jazzed up since it made its appearance on NES back in 1989, and the pair look great – they have a kind of claymation feel to them. Also, you can use the touch-screen to select from the 20 beans you'll need to get through the 15 stages. Of course, Blobert telling you to save the land of Blobonia from an evil emperor may sound completely ridiculous, but the original was a classic and we're looking forward to this.

AGE OF EMPIRES

From: MAJESCO
Out: OCTOBER



When the DS launched, we didn't foresee this. Sure, *Advance Wars* has proved that strategy can be great on handhelds, but now massive life-sucking, chin-strokey PC sims are on the way. We've already seen *Shogun* and *Black & White*, and now we've got *Age of Empires*.

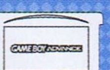
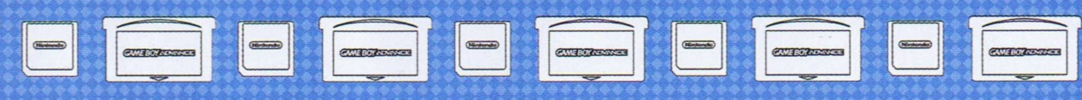
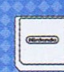
While it's based on *Age of Empires 2*, unlike on the PC, the battles are all turn-based and will take place on the top screen. Also, you'll be able to use the WiFi connectivity to battle with up to four other people simultaneously in a multiplayer campaign.

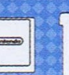
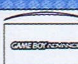
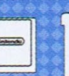
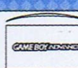
Last month we told you that you'd start by taking command of an ancient civilisation and building their empire, but the best thing about *Age of Empires* is that alongside the Britons, Franks, Mongols, Saracens and Japanese, there are special hero units, including Richard the Lionheart, Genghis Khan and Robin Hood. These hero units are tough, and have special powers that will affect the battlefield.

But it's not all fighting, as first you'll need a base to start from, so you'll need to build up town centres and universities to help your team learn new skills in classic resource-management style. So while it won't compete with the cuteness of *Advance Wars*, *Age of Empires 2* could be the most in-depth, hardcore handheld strategy ever.



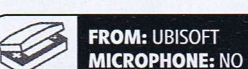
△ **You'll see all the battle action kicking off on the top-screen.**

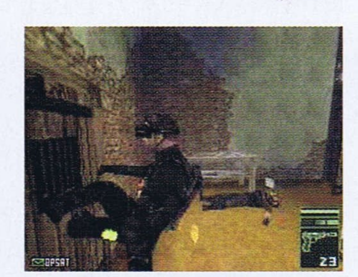


SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY



FROM: UBISOFT **MICROPHONE:** NO **PLAYERS:** 2 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

Sam Fisher saves the world… again! Hey, we all need hobbies.



△ **Sam gives the door a bit of the old Van Damme treatment.**



Sam Fisher must be an angry man. And not just because of the all obvious 'having the weight of the world on his shoulders/ dealing with the filthiest dregs of humanity/having to wear those stupid goggles' reasons.

Having pretty much perfected his game, he's only gone and had many of the things that made the Gamecube *Chaos Theory* the pinnacle of the series so far taken away from him.

For instance, the ability to save anywhere has been removed. It's a lot to ask of a DS cart, granted, but to revert to the old checkpoint system here feels like a rather unpleasant step backwards. Possibly into something a dog did.

'Ah well,' you think, 'At least they wouldn't be so stupid as to return to the three strikes and you're out alarm system – that was one of the most nonsensical and annoying gameplay devices I've ever encountered.' But sadly, you'd be wrong again.

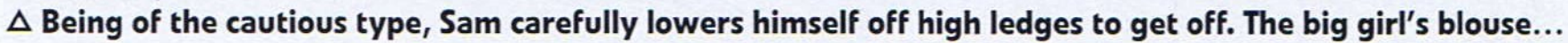
"FEELS LIKE A RATHER UNPLEASANT STEP BACKWARDS"

What's the point of making a game that has almost exactly the same characters, levels and plot as the one most people have already played, and *then* making it seemingly worse? It's been said before with similar cross-over games, but surely an entirely original *Splinter Cell* title would be far more appropriate for the DS?

Sneak around these gripes though, and there's an enjoyable game underneath that might just tickle your touch-screen…

The transition from 2D to 3D for the handheld has been a remarkable success. Levels are finally the moodily lit, atmospheric haunts that made the series famous – a feeling increased ten-fold by the inclusion of the original's excellent soundtrack.



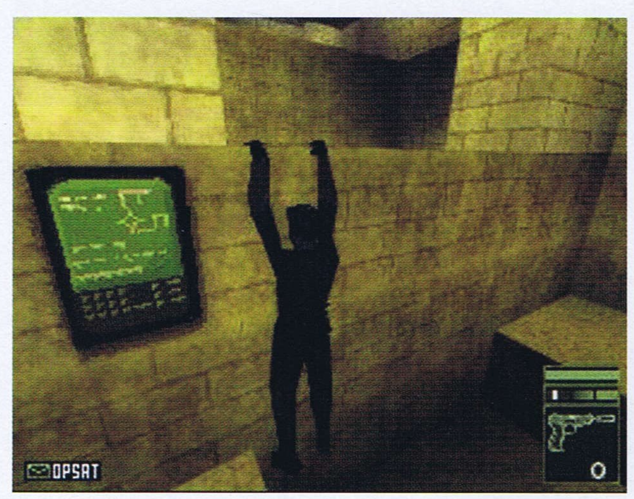


△ Being of the cautious type, Sam carefully lowers himself off high ledges to get off. The big girl's blouse...





△ To pick the lock, you move the actual lock-pins using the stylus – sublime.



△ The conversion to the DS has been surprisingly kind. Despite a few framerate issues, by and large it has all been squeezed in.



△ This is part of the first wave of true 3D handheld games to emerge onto the market, and we're impressed – it looks great.

Despite the cut control-set, most of Sam's moves have managed to be included, too. Hanging upside down from a pipe then strangling a guard who walks underneath, shooting over the shoulder of a hostage guard, split jumping or bashing open a door to floor the bad guy beyond it – all these brilliant features return for DS.

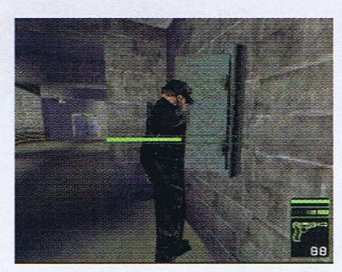
The levels themselves, while linear and based on the same locations as those from the original game, are, er, entirely original. You can't fail to be impressed by how much detail and texture variety has been achieved, although, it must be said this comes at a slightly too obvious cost to the framerate, which is only exacerbated by the use of the night and thermal visions modes.

Generally though, things look quite rosy – until the first time you come to an unknown corner… Normally, you'd hug the wall, flick the camera around to see if anything's ahead, move away from the wall and head off. Problem: there is no right analogue stick. The solution is a simple one – the stylus can be dragged across the touch-screen to manoeuvre the camera at will (and to aim Sam's guns). It's very precise, although it will take some getting used to even for seasoned touch-screen users.

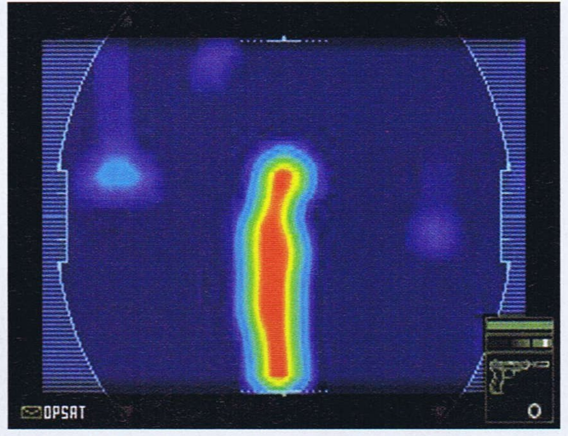
Thankfully, they realised that the system might alienate newcomers, and added a detailed radar into the touch-screen, making painstaking camera placement less of an issue.

But it all falls apart a little when guards enter the mix. Looking under a doorway we saw a guard approaching and with only moments to think, we retreated into the room and tried to climb onto a shadowy bookcase ahead. Under such pressure, these kind of sudden reactions are a real pain, not least because you have to endlessly switch between using your stylus to position Sam and moving your thumb back over to the right to reach the action keys. It might sound like a small thing, but it really limits your ability to move precisely under pressure.

And, when a guard does stumble upon you, there's a second problem – Sam's knife and elbow-knock melee attacks



△ If you get caught… Sadly the 'three strikes' rule has made a return.



△ Thermal vision is far worse than night vision for slowdown, but it looks far, far sexier. And you can pretend you're the Predator…



△ Touch-screen camera control means that you can see what's going on no matter what Sam is doing. Well, in theory.

△ Sam Fisher in visiting-a-brothel shocker! Don't worry, Sam's not a closet perv (disregard the black leather fetish), this is business, not pleasure. Unless he happens to enjoy the killing, that is.

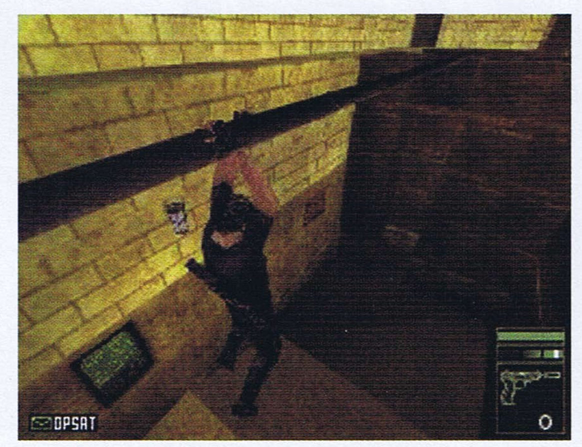
are gone, so if you don't avoid a guard, your only option is to grab him from behind or just shoot him. Strangely, the second option is nearly always the one to go for – guards rarely appear in groups, and with the excellent zoom on your SC20K, popping headshots through every goon you meet soon becomes a habit. Arguably a bad one, when you think about it, because it's hardly what the series is about, and it prevents you from really having to think your way past most opponents – you'll be dealing out lead surprises faster than they can say 'was that a noise I just heard?' Which is exactly the sort of thing they like to say, and goes a long way toward explaining why the terrorists are generally so incompetent…

"DOES THE DS VERSION HAVE ANY ADVANTAGES…? SURPRISINGLY, YES."

Does the DS version have any advantages over the game that spawned it? Surprisingly, yes – and they're biggies. The first is the touch-screen – you use it to jiggle the pins in lockpicking mode and to actually







△ **The DS's graphical grunt is more than enough to keep Sam's animations surprisingly smooth throughout the game.**



△ **Use your vision modes with the radar to spot every guard early.**



△ **Pull Sam's legs up to squeeze through small gaps. So to speak…**

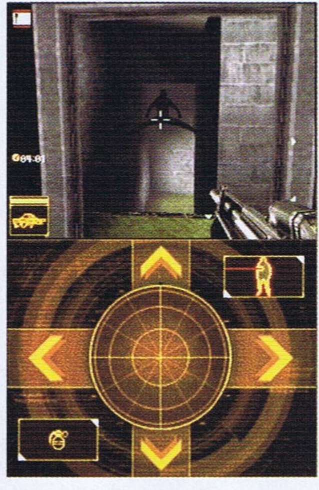


△ **Despite his hectic schedule, Sam really likes hanging out. Sorry.**

△ **The new co-op mode is brilliant.**

FUN FOR ALL

Will you do it solo, or with a friend?





SOLO

With a plot almost identical to the Gamecube version and similar locations, this mode doesn't offer the most new content for long term fans, but newcomers will lap it all up – especially Sam's incessant sarcasm. A checkpoint system spins out the lifespan a bit across the 9 levels on offer here.

CO-OP

This is really a rather superb mode, with five missions you can play with a friend over the DS's WiFi connection. It's fun to take it in turns as decoy and killer, leading guards into each other's traps. It requires co-ordination, but it can be far more rewarding than the single-player game.

ADVERSARIAL

A supremely likeable mode, in which a pair of spies attempt to access three computers being guarded by a pair of mercenaries – played in the first-person perspective – who are out to hunt them down. Both control systems require practice, but this is a real selling point of the game.

press the numbers on keypads. It may sound silly, but it's satisfying – it makes the game world seem more realistic. It's a pity this wasn't capitalised on to create even more in-game touch-screen uses. Best of all though is the, er, pause menu. It's a version of Sam's famous wrist-mounted PDA, but instead of being a virtual one, the stylus means it really does feel the part, with the different objectives, notes and data all easily accessible through the touch-screen. It really does work an absolute treat.

To top this off, there's a complete version of the multiplayer game. With five original co-op missions and a version of the excellent Spies vs. Mercs multiplayer missions, you really do have to give it a go. But it must be said that controlling the mercenaries in the first-person perspective is as tough to get used to as the problem of flicking between the action buttons and the touch-screen in single-player mode, which can get a little annoying.

In both single-player and multiplayer, the game never seems to come *completely* together, but there are times – real, memorable, tell-all-your-friends moments – when you get that *Splinter Cell* feeling, and the magic of the moment comes together to make for some breathlessly exciting gaming.

Sadly though, with a repeated plot, incredibly similar locations, flawed control in both modes and the rubbish three strike checkpoint/alarm systems, this is not half the game it could have been.

Chaos Theory is essentially a tool for preaching to the converted. By now people will know whether they love it or loathe it, and unfortunately the addition of the excellent multiplayer modes and the surprisingly well executed DS conversion aren't enough to make it a must-buy.

DUNCAN LEIGH

DUAL ★★★★
TOUCH ★★★

3



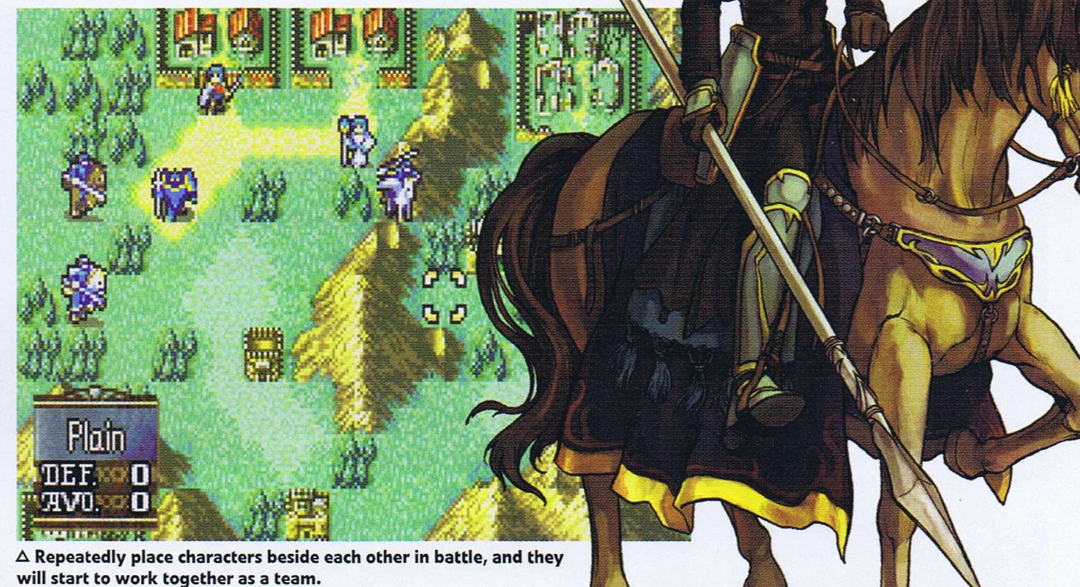
△ Pretty much any action on the battlefield will result in EXP.



△ You can now spend your precious EXP on the map screen between levels.



△ The back stories are an endearing feature. You end up truly *caring*.



△ Repeatedly place characters beside each other in battle, and they will start to work together as a team.

FIRE EMBLEM THE SACRED STONES

DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO **RELEASE: OUT NOW** (US)/ **TBA** (UK)

The hardcore strategy game with a heart of gold.



Gaming on the go is one of modern life's greatest distractions but, truth be told, some genres are simply better suited to it than others. The sounds of Advance Wars-inspired anguish and elation have long drifted from toilet cubicles across the nation, proving that pick-up-and-play strategy gaming is king for work-shy boss-dodgers. You take a crack team of fighters, magicians and healers through a medieval yarn full of the brand of Greek tragedy you would expect to find underpinning the latest Ridley Scott epic.

The Fire Emblem series, as Advance Wars' sterner faced, historically themed brother, is the type of game that the GBA lives for. Its delightful, uncurling narrative and deeply engaging gameplay eloquently argues the case that gaming on a dubiously stained bus seat can be just as engrossing, if not more so, than on a comfy sofa and ocean-wide TV screen with booming surround-sound.



Technically, both Fire Emblem and Advance Wars share a developer and are, ostensibly, very similar both visually and mechanically. Fire Emblem employs a similar scissor-paper-stone system on which all encounters are based. But where the two series differ is that Fire Emblem is generally favoured by masochist strategy types who like to be treated roughly by a merciless AI foe, and who consider *Advance Wars*, with its disposable and infinitely purchasable troops, for pussies.

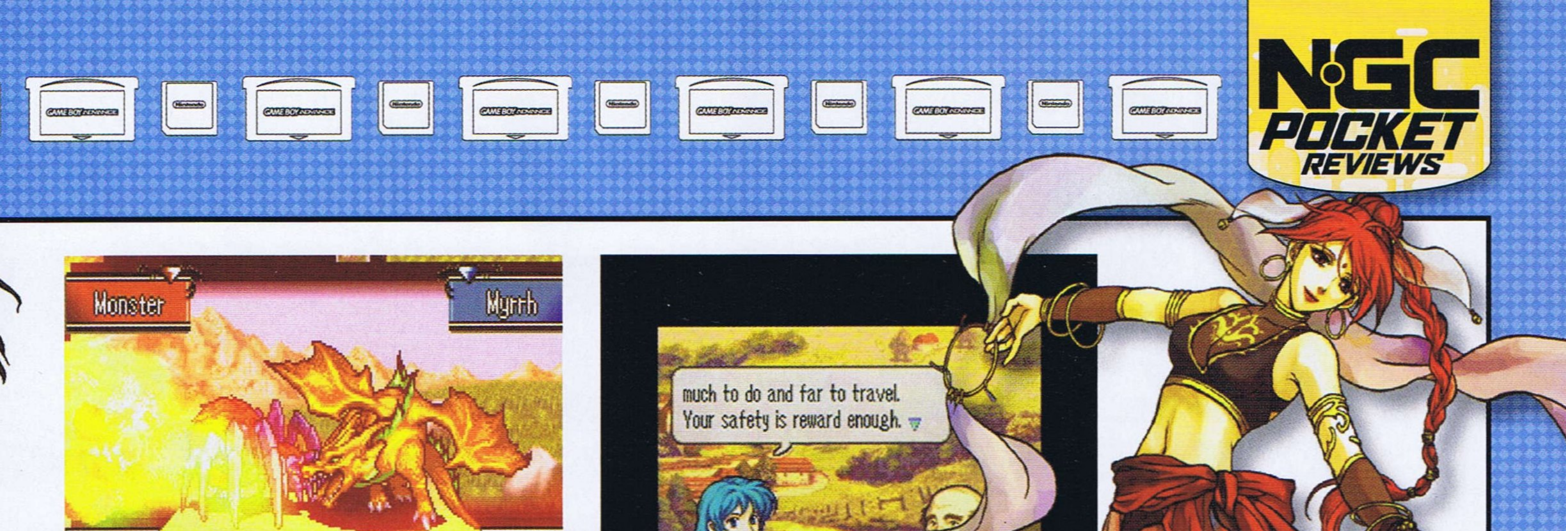
The benefit of the system is that the stakes are raised so high that play transcends the player's usual laissez-faire attitude to continuing. Videogaming generally teaches us that life is cheap, restarts are easy and units are replaceable. But here, as you learn the elaborate back-story for each of your characters, you feel a grave responsibility knowing that your tactical screw-up could end their lives for good.

> **"IF THERE'S ANY CRITICISM, IT'S THAT THE GAME MAKES YOU CARE TOO MUCH"**

This is largely because you have a strictly limited number of team members who stay with you for life, or at least until death. Allow one of your characters to be drawn into a skirmish they can't win and they'll stay dead. Forever. There's no way to revive them and no replacements so, after twenty hours, should you find yourself with only a handful of characters still alive, you might find you can't actually complete the game. It's tough at the top and, rest assured, if tough strategy gaming is your cup of hit points, this is the summit.

The main change for *The Sacred Stones* is the introduction of a map that comes into play in-between the battle and story sections. It allows players to revisit areas to buy weapons (previously only possible by visiting shops in the field during a battle) as well as providing optional random dungeon maps.

It's not a major development, but you'd be surprised at how it alters the gameplay experience. Before, you had only the current battle in the story to use for levelling up, which meant the developer was always able



△ Make a wrong move and the classic 'switch the system off to restart the turn' tactic won't work. This is because the game remembers your very last move before it's switched off.



△ Each type of character has a different tactical use on the battlefield.



△ As a result of the battle system, *Fire Emblem* bares a resemblance to chess.

to set a decent challenge. Now it's possible to over-level your team if you want to, making it a breeze to finish the game. As you'll always want to keep your whole team alive, it's too much of a temptation to resist, and you will find it can upset the difficulty curve.

That said, *The Sacred Stones* is a game that grabs you by the soul and wrenches you into its world. After a few chapters, the brilliant translation from the original Japanese gives you a full understanding of all the various geo-political struggles, and you will have long ago decided on your favourite team members. If there's any criticism, it's that game makes you care *too much*.

You can easily spend hours poring over a battle if you're not careful, gradually inching your team to victory, only for a seemingly inconsequential misjudgement to send one character to their death. Rather than press on, you'll find restarting almost irresistible, and miraculously, after the initial frustration fades away, you'll soon be having so much fun again that it won't even seem to matter.

SIMON PARKIN

4



△ The story has been translated brilliantly. You won't find any bursts of unintentional comedy here...

HISTORICALLY MINDED

The Sacred Stones is the third Fire Emblem game on GBA, but its history stretches way back into the Super Nintendo era. Indeed, the late Gunpei Yokoi, the man who invented Nintendo's Game and Watch series as well as the Game Boy itself, produced some of the early Fire Emblem games, so its pedigree is impeccable. The biggest difference between The Sacred Stones *and its two handheld forbears is the reintroduction of some of the SNES era's intricacies. For example, the game relaunches the Skill commands from* Fire Emblem IV *and* V *which enables higher-level characters to use intermittent offensive abilities such as the assassin's instant KO move or the sniper's 100% hit sure shot.*



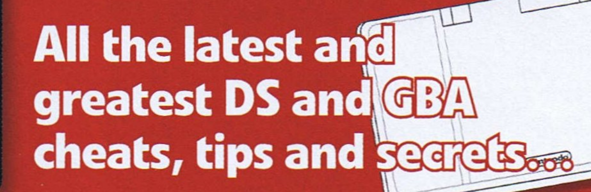
△ All the usual character-types are present in *The Sacred Stones*, like magicians, knights and healers.



△ The map screen is new for the Fire Emblem series. It allows you to understand the politics of the battles.

NGC POCKET

TIPS • TIPS • TIPS



All the latest and greatest DS and GBA cheats, tips and secrets...

TIP OF THE MONTH

RIDGE RACER DS

UNLOCK CARS: 00-AGENT, CADDY CAR, GALAGA '88, MARIO RACING, POOKA, RED SHIRT RAGE, SHY GUY.
Finish every Platinum Cup or compete in more than 10 multiplayer races.

13TH RACING KID
Win Grand Prix race 4 and then beat the 13th Racing Kid in Car Attack mode.

AGE SOLO S
Win Grand Prix 5 and then beat Age Solo S in Car Attack mode.

ASSOLUTO INFINITO
Win Grand Prix 5 and then beat Assoluto Infinito in Car Attack mode.

ATOMIC PURPLE
Win Grand Prix 6 and then beat Atomic Purple in Car Attack mode.

BURNING NIGHTMARE
Win Grand Prix 7 and then beat Burning Nightmare in Car Attack mode.

DIG RACING TEAM
Win Grand Prix 3 and then beat Dig Racing Team in Car Attack mode.

DK TEAM RACING
Win Grand Prix 6 and then beat DK Team Racing in Car Attack mode.

GALAGA RT BLUE
Win Grand Prix 3 and then beat Galaga RT Blue in Car Attack mode.

GALAGA RT RED
Win Grand Prix 2 and then beat Galaga RT Red in Car Attack mode.

GALAXIAN PARADISE
Win Grand Prix 4 and then beat Galaxian Paradise in Car Attack mode.

MICRO MOUSE MAPPY
Win Grand Prix 4 and then beat Micro Mouse Mappy in Car Attack mode.

RACING TEAM LUIGI
Win Grand Prix 8 and then beat Racing Team Luigi in Car Attack mode.

RACING TEAM PEACH
Win Grand Prix 5 and then beat Racing Team Peach in Car Attack mode.

RT BLUE MAPPY
Win Grand Prix 1 and then beat RT Blue Mappy in Car Attack mode.

RT BOSCONIAN
Win Grand Prix 2 and then beat RT Bosconian in Car Attack mode.

RT NEBULASRAY
Win Grand Prix 2 and then beat RT Nebulasray in Car Attack mode.

RT PINK MAPPY
Win Grand Prix 1 and then beat RT Pink Mappy in Car Attack mode.

RT XEVIOUS GREEN
Win Grand Prix 3 and then beat RT Xevious Green in Car Attack mode.

RT XEVIOUS RED
Win Grand Prix 1 and then beat RT Xevious Red in Car Attack mode.

TERRAZI TERRIFIC
Win Grand Prix 6 and then beat Terrazi Terrific in Car Attack mode.





△ There are some good ships to unlock here. Defeating Anakin is worth all the trouble as you'll unlock the Millennium Falcon...

STAR WARS EPISODE III



Unlock Starfighters
Complete the game on any difficulty setting.

Unlock Anakin's Starfighter II
Defeat Anakin on any difficulty setting.

Unlock Obi-Wan's Starfighter II
Defeat Obi-Wan on any difficulty setting.

Unlock Anakin's Starfighter
Defeat the Anakin bot.

Unlock Darth Vader's Tie Fighter
Defeat the Darth Vader bot.





△ You'll learn some new saber skills as you progress through the levels.

Unlock General Grevious' Starfighter
Defeat the General Grevious bot.

Unlock the Millennium Falcon
Defeat Anakin on any difficulty setting.

Unlock the Millennium Falcon
Defeat the Han Solo bot.

Unlock Slave I
Defeat the Bobba Fett bot.

Unlock X-Wing
Defeat the Luke bot.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2



Brakes Bonus
Score more than 7500 points in Pressure Tuning 2.

Chassis Bonus
Score more than 5000 points in Pressure Tuning 1.

Controls Bonus
Score more than 5000 points in Engine Tuning 3.

Drivetrain Bonus
Score more than 50 points in Dyno Run 1.

Engine Bonus
Score more than 100 points in Nitrous Tuning 1.

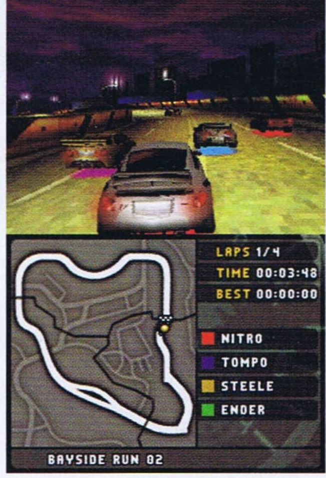
Exhaust Bonus
Score more than 2000 points in Engine Tuning 1.

Nitrous Bonus
Score more than 175 points in Nitrous Tuning 3.

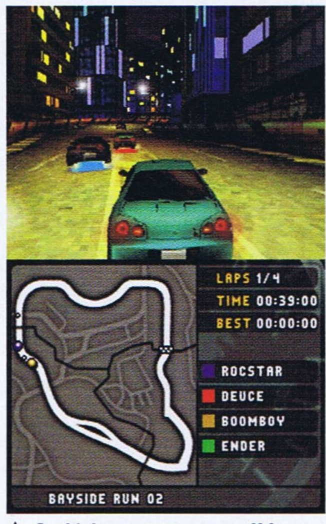
Suspension Bonus
Score more than 100 points in Dyno Run 2.

SEND US YOUR SECRETS

Unlocked some more new cars in *Ridge Racer DS*? Found a good tip for destroying Anakin in *Star Wars*? Or have you found any cool secrets or smart tricks in any of your DS or GBA games? We want to hear from you. Send us your secrets and we'll print the best ones every month, and our favourite entry will win a game. But, be warned: if we catch you cut and pasting cheat codes from the 'net, we'll get rather cross. Post your entries to Pocket Tips, **NGC**, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Or Email your entries to ngc@futurenet.co.uk (title the email Pocket Tips).



△ **The framerate is much better than in the Gamecube version.**



△ **Get high scores to earn stuff for your blinged up motor.**



△ **You can add neon lights to the underside of your car. It'll make you look really cool. About as cool as pushing a baby around in a Burberry pram.**

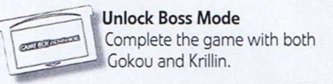


△ **You could have this lovely logo slapped on your sports car.**

Turbo Bonus
Score more than 150 points in Nitrous Tuning 2.

Wheels Bonus
Score more than 4000 points in Engine Tuning 2.

DRAGON BALL ADVANCE ADVENTURE



Unlock Boss Mode
Complete the game with both Gokou and Krillin.

Unlock Boss Mode
Collect all 54 items in Story and Extra mode.

Unlock King Piccolo
Complete the game with Gokou.

Unlock Piccolo
Complete the game with Krillin.

Unlock Juckie Chun, Taopaipai, Son Gohan and Tenshinhan in Free Battle Mode
Beat all of the above characters in the Story mode.

Play as Klylin in Story Mode
Complete Story mode with Gokou.

Play as Krilin
Complete the game as Gokou.

Unlock Rock Breaking Mini-Game
Complete the game with Gokou.

Sound Test
Complete Boss mode.

Unlock Sound Test
Beat Boss Rush mode.

Unlock Cyborg Taopaipai in Tournament Mode
Beat Cyborg Taopaipai in the final level of Tournament mode.

Unlock Extra Mode
Complete Story mode with Gokou.

Unlock Juckie Chun in Tournament Mode
Defeat Juckie Chun with Gokou in Story mode.

Unlock Mini-Game Mode
Complete the game with Gokou.

Unlock Piccolo in Tournament Mode
Complete the game with Krilin.

Unlock Son Gohan in Tournament Mode
Defeat Son Gohan with Gokou in Story mode.

Unlock Survival Mode in Free Battle Mode
Beat Story mode with Gokou.

Unlock Taopaipai for Tournament Mode
Defeat Taopaipai with Gokou in Story mode.

Unlock Tenshinhan for Tournament Mode
Defeat Tenshinhan with Gokou in Story mode.

Unlock Cyber Taopaipai in Free Battle Mode
Defeat Cyber Taopaipai in Survival mode after unlocking Piccolo.

Unlock Piccolo in Free Battle Mode
Complete the game with Gokou and Klylin.

Play as the Characters You Fought in Vs Mode in Extra Mode (Except Piccolo and Cyborg Taopaipai)
Complete the game with Gokou and Klylin.

Play as the Characters You Fought in Vs Mode in Extra Mode (Except Piccolo and Cyborg Taopaipai)
Collect every Dragon Ball and find their portraits in Extra mode.



△ **That's Gokou, also known as Goku. You can just tell he's about to go 'Kamehameha' any minute now. Either that or 'argh' as he gets shot.**

△ **Something tells us that those attacks could cancel each other out…**



△ **Only Dragon Ball could get away with a bear in purple dungarees.**



PICTO ANIMATIONS

Your stylus scribblings printed up real nice…



up, even without an actual game inside it, the DS proves to be a highly entertaining slab of plastic. True, most of the stuff that flows from **NGC**'s collective styluses is either rude, morally ambiguous or (in Kittsy's case) illegal in some states of America – but there's no disputing the fact that many creations have had us laughing so hard we've actually shat out *whole lungs*. Unfortunately, in the interest of common decency, we have to spare you those particular gems…

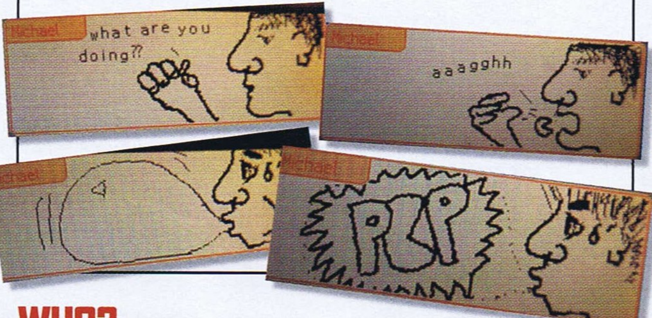
TENTACLE

Thomas Watling of Long Eaton sent us the only full (ie moving) animation of the month, depicting a deep-sea diver getting his head crushed by some kind of tentacle.



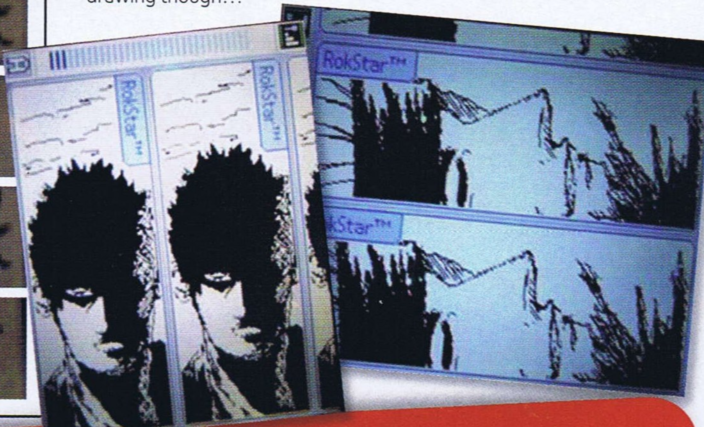
PAC PIX POP

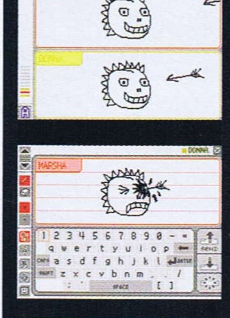
Another classy animation courtesy of Michael Rosenstock of Co. Wicklow in Ireland – this time with Pac-Man being chewed up and blown into a bubble.



WHO?

"Hope you guys appreciate it – I know there are some manga fans around there" says Tom Wiertz, aka RokStar, via email. Well yes, we are big manga fans, but we're damned if we know who this fella is. Nice drawing though…





HOW TO DO IT…

1. *Draw a little picture of something and then click on Send.*
2. *Now copy that picture back into your drawing board and make a little change to it before sending it again.*
3. *Now copy that picture onto your drawing board again, and edit it for the third frame in the animation. Keep sending and copying your picture back and forth, making all your little changes along the way.*
4. *The amount of space you have left in the message log is shown by the meter to the left-hand side. Keep an eye on it.*
5. *Once you've finished the final frame of your animation, press the up arrow to flick back through the message log until you reach the top.*
6. *Now hold down the left shoulder button and then half a second later, hold down the right shoulder button.*

N·GC POCKET
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

We want your Pictochat artwork

Have you done something amazingly creative with your DS and *Pictochat*? If you've made pictures, animations or anything else you'd like to share with the world, we'd love to see it. As you can't save your pictures on the DS, this is what we'd like you to do. When you've finished with your Picto art, turn the lights off, take a photo with a digital camera and send it as an email (titled Pictoart) to **ngc@futurenet.co.uk**. If you haven't got access to a digital camera, just send a normal photograph to: Pictoart, **NGC** Magazine 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.



AUGUST 2005
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Visuals to die for – and what developers will actually be using them to create
THE NEW SPEC WARS
How PS3 and Xbox 360 match up when it comes to processing power
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REVIEWED KILLER 7 BATTLEFIELD 2 GUILD WARS FIRE EM
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OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

KILLER 7

It's quite simply the strangest game of this generation – and we've played it to completion. Twice. You'll find the verdict over on page... P62

MEDAL OF HONOR

A bunch of men scrabbling around in the dirt, their guts spilling out onto sandy beaches and spurting up the ruins of European cities – but enough about Geraint's holiday... P76

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

25-49
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

NGC STAR GAME

MEET THE NGC TEAM

In celebration of Killer 7 – here are some true – but odd – **NGC** facts...



TOM E
I once dyed my hair a beautiful shade of granny-blue in an attempt to impress a girl. The strange thing is that it worked.



MARTIN
I once gave my mum some freezer bags and a receipt book of carbon paper for her birthday. She slapped me. Hard.



PAUL
I ran through Frome naked. 'Nuff said.



GERAINT
I stuck my finger in the maggoty hole of a dead bird and ended up in hospital £50 the richer.

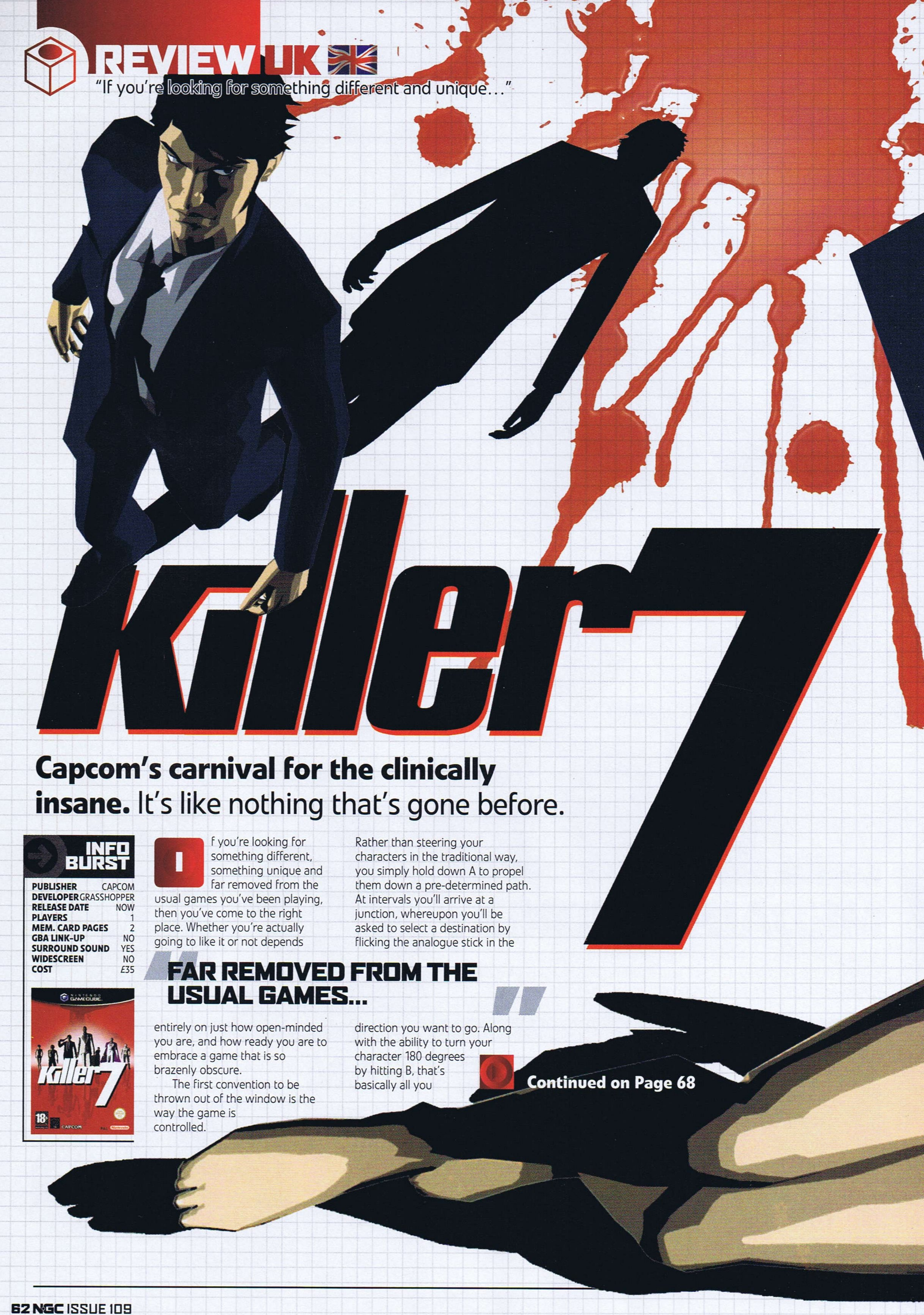


TOM S
I drank a shot of washing up liquid and ate a slug. (this was actually only two weeks ago by the way – Ed)



GREENER
One icy night I slipped and hit my head. I woke to find a tramp leaning over me with a mouth full of paint.

"If you're looking for something different and unique..."



killer7

Capcom's carnival for the clinically insane. It's like nothing that's gone before.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	GRASSHOPPER
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£35

If you're looking for something different, something unique and far removed from the usual games you've been playing, then you've come to the right place. Whether you're actually going to like it or not depends entirely on just how open-minded you are, and how ready you are to embrace a game that is so brazenly obscure.

The first convention to be thrown out of the window is the way the game is controlled. Rather than steering your characters in the traditional way, you simply hold down A to propel them down a pre-determined path. At intervals you'll arrive at a junction, whereupon you'll be asked to select a destination by flicking the analogue stick in the direction you want to go. Along with the ability to turn your character 180 degrees by hitting B, that's basically all you

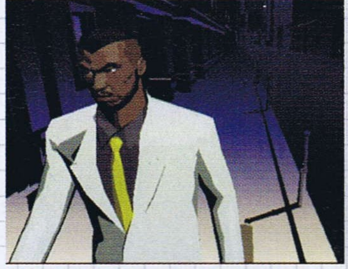
"FAR REMOVED FROM THE USUAL GAMES..."

Continued on Page 68


Hallway
Hallway

KILLER 7'S MENTAL FIRST LEVEL

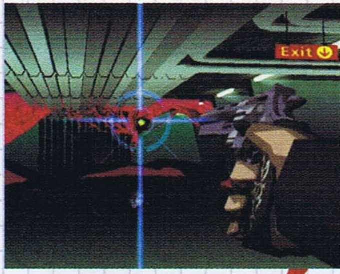
Come on then Psycho, it's time to get your hands dirty…



1 The level begins with Garcian. He has to infiltrate the Heaven's Smile's HQ and capture their leader.



2 It's not long before you meet your first Smile. Change to the more powerful Dan Smith and target the weak spot.



3 Dan can charge his shot to up to three times the power – ideal for dealing with this enemy, who is guarding…



4 …a Soul Shell hidden in the boot of a car. You need to collect two of these to get past the gatekeeper for the boss.





7 A disembodied head in a tumble dryer. If you turn the dryer off, it will speak to you, and even give you a handy fire-ring.



8 These rings are integral to the puzzles. In this case you need it to light candles in a certain order to retrieve an item.



11 You'll come across barriers that can only be unlocked with certain characters. If they're dormant, try waking them.



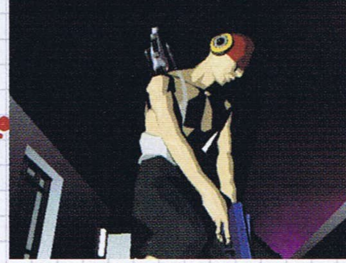
12 Kaede has her own way of unlocking barriers. By slitting her wrist, she unlocks a barrier to the last Soul Shell.



15 Don't be fooled by the first boss's angelic features. Use Harman's assault rifle and blow her pretty little wings clean off for a lovely, exploding, feathery shower.



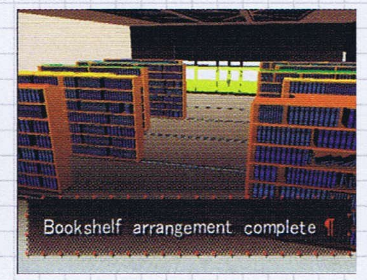
5 Things get tougher here, with more enemies attacking at once. Change over to the faster, dual pistol wielding Con.



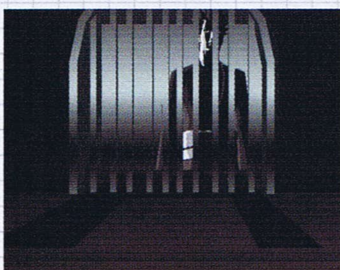
6 You can now explore levels faster. Here, Con has found a carrier pigeon, which gives details about the Killer 7.



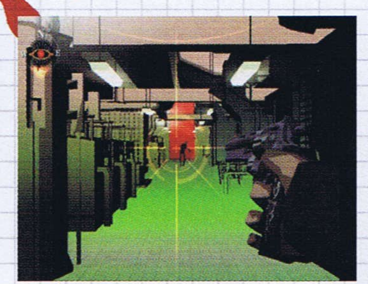
9 It is also used to activate a sprinkler system in a toilet. This fills the cistern, which gives you another item.



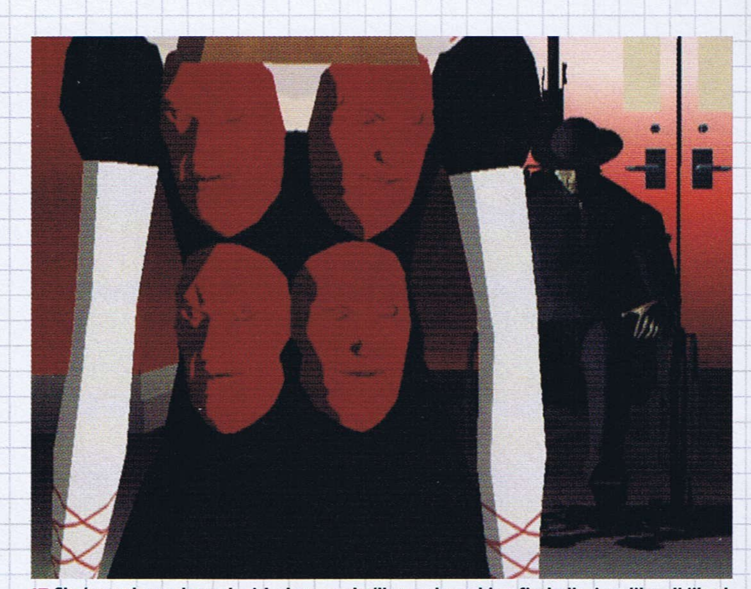
10 These two items will activate these bookshelves in the library, allowing you to progress further.



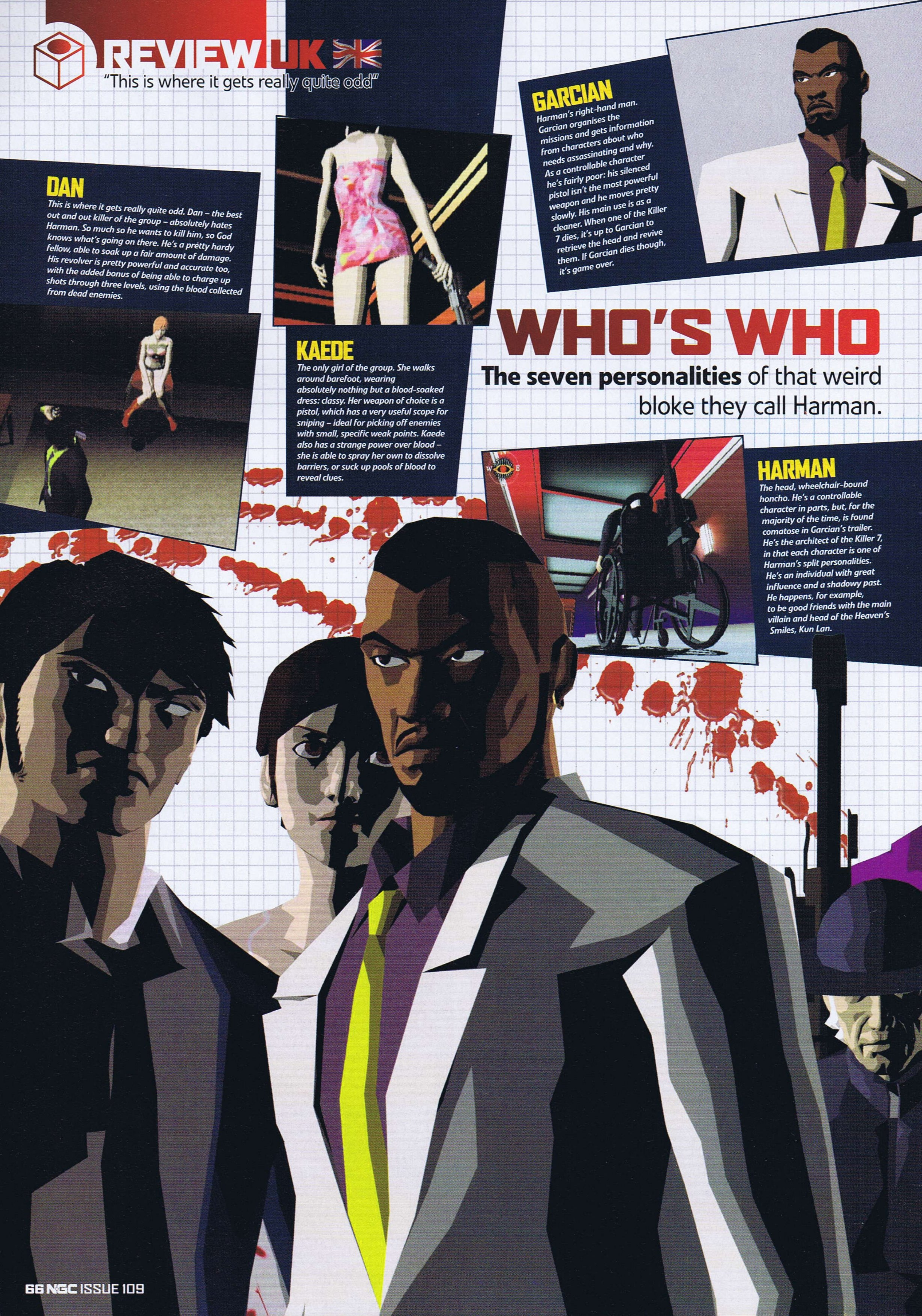
13 You need the two Soul Shells to enter the final part of the level. The entrance of which is guarded by this fellow.



14 You have a different breed of Smile to dispose of – take your pick as to which character is best to deal with it.



16 She's not best pleased with that, so she'll start launching fireballs, just like all jilted Angels do. Get behind her when she's busy and shoot the face-growths off her back.



WHO'S WHO

The seven personalities of that weird bloke they call Harman.

GARCIAN

Harman's right-hand man. Garcian organises the missions and gets information from characters about who needs assassinating and why. As a controllable character he's fairly poor: his silenced pistol isn't the most powerful weapon and he moves pretty slowly. His main use is as a cleaner. When one of the Killer 7 dies, it's up to Garcian to retrieve the head and revive them. If Garcian dies though, it's game over.

DAN

This is where it gets really quite odd. Dan – the best out and out killer of the group – absolutely hates Harman. So much so he wants to kill him, so God knows what's going on there. He's a pretty hardy fellow, able to soak up a fair amount of damage. His revolver is pretty powerful and accurate too, with the added bonus of being able to charge up shots through three levels, using the blood collected from dead enemies.

KAEDE

The only girl of the group. She walks around barefoot, wearing absolutely nothing but a blood-soaked dress: classy. Her weapon of choice is a pistol, which has a very useful scope for sniping – ideal for picking off enemies with small, specific weak points. Kaede also has a strange power over blood – she is able to spray her own to dissolve barriers, or suck up pools of blood to reveal clues.

HARMAN

The head, wheelchair-bound honcho. He's a controllable character in parts, but, for the majority of the time, is found comatose in Garcian's trailer. He's the architect of the Killer 7, in that each character is one of Harman's split personalities. He's an individual with great influence and a shadowy past. He happens, for example, to be good friends with the main villain and head of the Heaven's Smiles, Kun Lan.



COYOTE

One of the more useful personalities, Coyote has a revolver fairly similar to Dan's. He also has a charge function that allows him to deliver more power with each shot, and he reloads quite quickly, which helps in tight situations. Coyote is a thief by trade, and so can pick any padlocks you come across. He's also an agile jumper – allowing him to reach places the others can't.

CON

Probably our favourite personality of the lot. His twin rapid-fire pistols and super-fast reload animation make him absolutely ideal for taking out large numbers of enemies, and hitting weak-spots with him is much easier. He's also extremely light on his feet and triggering his special ability makes him run through levels at lightning speed, which is great for long distances or escaping from enemies.

KEVIN

This silent albino is probably our least favourite of all the personalities. He is unique in that he's the only character that doesn't actually use a gun – favouring throwing knives instead. They are pretty weak, unfortunately, but they do have the advantage of being fairly rapid to fire and, more importantly, you will never have to reload. The only other useful skill he has is that he can make himself invisible to any security systems, like beams and cameras.

MASK DE SMITH

An ex-wrestler. He's slow moving, but very powerful. He has two grenade launchers, which can take down pretty much anything in a couple of shots. The downside is that you only get one shot before you have to reload again. He's useful for taking down any physical barriers through sheer strength, or blasting through any cracked walls with his grenades.

"We've always been advocates of developers trying something different"

Δ Kaede at the scene of one of her fallen comrades. If you want him to be ressurected, you're going to have to get Garcian on the case.

Δ Despite each level playing the same, the variety of locations keeps things feeling fresh.

Δ One of the more 'interesting' cutscenes. Here Ulmeyda explodes in a fury of tentacles.

Δ Mahjong. Evidently one of Japan's bloodiest parlour games – ending in a four way shootout.

need to know about the way you move through the game. In our opinion, it's a system that works very well. Navigation through the game has been stripped bare to the point that you can switch off a part of your brain and just relax and enjoy the journey… kind of.

As you drive through the levels, you'll frequently hear the cackle of the game's enemies – a collection of freaks known as Heaven's Smiles. When you hear the laugh, you simply switch to FPS mode with R, before scanning the area by pressing L to reveal these invisible foes. From this point it's basically a shooting gallery. The Smiles will steadily advance and it's your job to either pump them full of bullets or, better, pick them off at their weak-spot for a one hit kill. Different enemies require different approaches (or in some cases a different personality) to kill them…

Ah, yes: the personalities. As you're no doubt aware by now, there are seven of these. When you begin a level, there are only a few available to you, and in order to unlock (or rather, 'wake up') each personality in the level, you need to meet a quota of kills. Once awake, you can then flip between them at will by pausing the game and selecting them from a menu.

Initially, you'll find you gravitate towards one individual and stick with them (in our case it was blind-boy, Con – mainly because he was the fastest). Which is fine up to a point, but in later levels you'll find that you have to frequently chop and change between each of the personalities, as their individual skills and abilities are required for solving puzzles, reaching certain areas and they prove more adept at defeating different enemies.

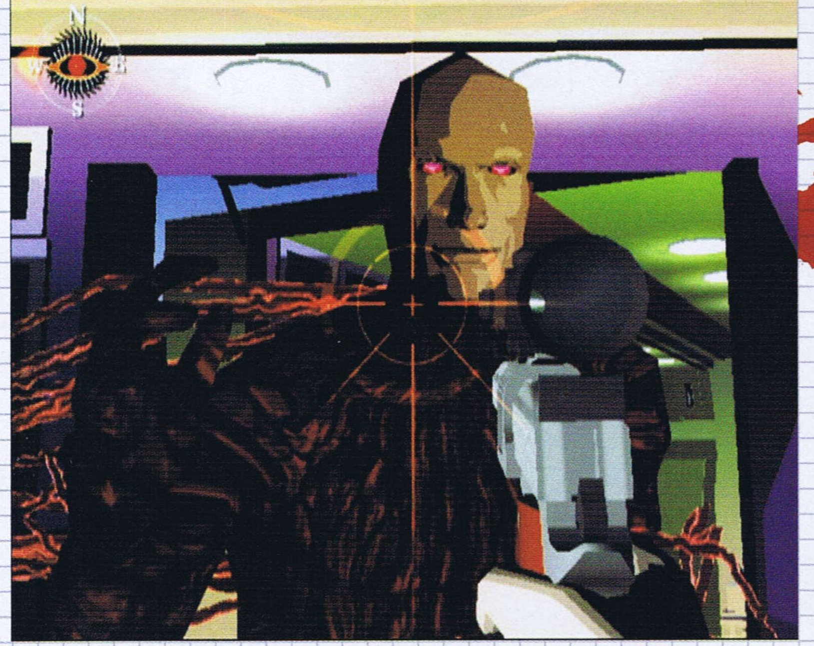
Each personality has four areas or traits that can be upgraded, like

> **"AS TO WHETHER WE ACTUALLY LIKE THE GAME, WELL, THAT'S A TOUGH ONE"**

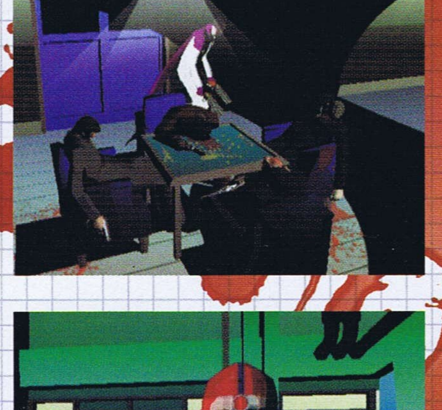


STEADY ON

To say this is unsuitable for the younger gamer is something of an understatement. Killer 7 isn't shy of bandying about the 'F' word, with some characters using it every time they score a one-hit kill. There's also some sexual content in here. Overall the game is extremely mature in tone and rather unsettling in places.



△ Each level is essentially a hit. Someone's up to no good and it's up to the Killer 7 to track them down and assassinate them – usually in the shape of an end of level boss.

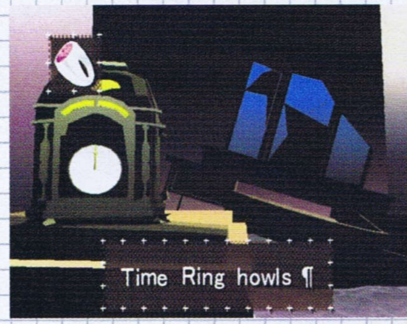


△ Iwazaru gives you clues about what to do.

AND… ACTION

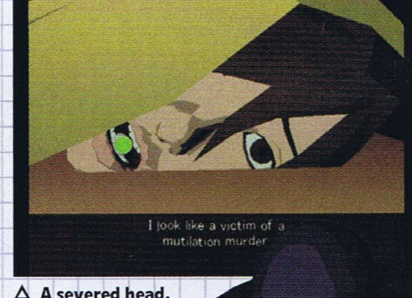
Being so simple and linear, it can get away with some outrageous camera angles and cinematic scenes that would otherwise irritate. It's also a uniquely beautiful game. While looking bland in screenshots, it looks utterly gorgeous in motion…





△ There are many rings, each with its own special power like wind, water, fire, stamina and so on…

△ This is Garcian's trailer, which acts like a base for the Killer 7. But all is not what it seems…



△ A severed head. In a box. With a ring.

attacking speed and power, and this is done by collecting blood from fallen Smiles and converting it into property-boosting serum.

So that's the basic structure of the game, then. Simple enough, no? As to whether we actually *enjoy* the game, well, that's a tough one. In a word: yes, yes we do. But we went through a world of pain arriving at that conclusion. It helped that we *really wanted* to like it ever since we first saw those sumptuous, bleached-out visuals.

We've always been advocates of developers trying something different and delivering content that's unusual, compelling and that challenges the traditional conventions of what we consider to be normal in a game. In this case, Capcom have outdone themselves.



ANIMAGIC

At various points throughout the game, you'll be treated to some rather nice animated sequences – some of which are so mental that words can't possibly do them justice. Never over-long or intrusive, these prove an enjoyable little reward for your efforts, and really help bring Killer 7's universe to life.

It plays weird, it looks weird and the story enveloping the game, particularly the cutscenes and situations you encounter, are far more bizarre than you could ever imagine. One minute you're attacking a pair of Japanese politicians who catapult brains from their open skulls, the next you're chasing a glowing afro (attached to Medusa-like blood tendrils) around a maze built from ambulance

"Relentless in its quest to confuse, astonish and surprise"



Many puzzles require keen observation and a good memory.

We love this kind of stuff, and *Killer 7* is rife with some stunning visual touches and effects.

interiors. It is relentless in its quest to confuse, astonish and surprise. And it's perhaps for this reason alone that you're really compelled to play on…

But there are problems here. It doesn't help, for example, that the game can feel needlessly clumsy at times. The irony of this is that these moments are borne out of the game's so-called 'simplified' control scheme.

Take a simple retreat from a dangerous situation as an example. On many occasions you'll find you need to fall back from the enemy in order to stop yourself from taking an explosion to the face. In normal circumstances you would simply steer your way out of danger, but, as a result of the control scheme, you can't. You have to tap B to turn around, A to run, and then, should you be unlucky enough to be right in front of a junction, you have to select a destination to complete your escape.

In the panic of a close-encounter, this racks up vital milliseconds that can make the difference between safety and what feels like an unfair energy loss or your premature demise. Frustrating.

Furthermore, *Killer 7*s often twisted logic and off-the-wall scenarios can easily throw you off track if you're not really

LIFE BLOOD

Blood in Killer 7 is collected by defeating enemies. There are two kinds: thick blood, which can be converted into attribute-boosting serum, and blood which can be used to restore health and activate special abilities. There's never any shortage, but you can only convert 1500 units of thick blood into serum per level.

KILLER 7

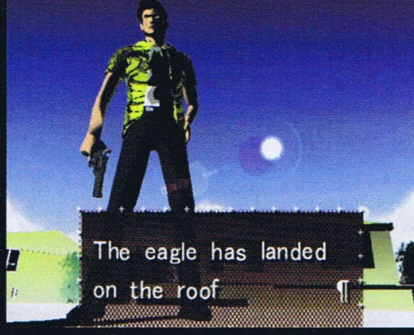
The weirdest game ever released?

GENIUS IT AIN'T

With puzzles being such an important part of the game, you would think that they'd be a little bit more taxing than they actually are…



Most of the puzzles in the game revolve around the somewhat simplistic 'take item A to item B' mechanism.



The personality-specific puzzles are the same. Change to the right personality in the right place and they'll open up the path ahead.

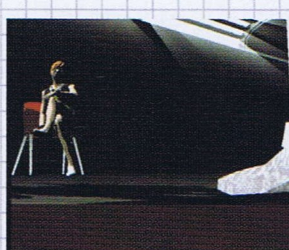
Azure Dragon paper door shuts ¶

It's one of the only games in recent memory that requires you to use a pen and paper. You're often given a clue to remember for later.

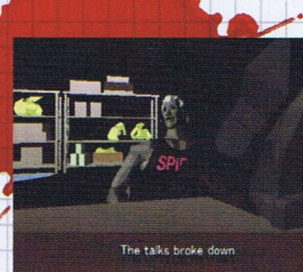
The puzzles are all pretty much the same throughout the game. *Surely* Capcom have a little more imagination than this?

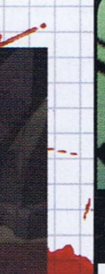


Change personality and watch your character's bloody explosion.

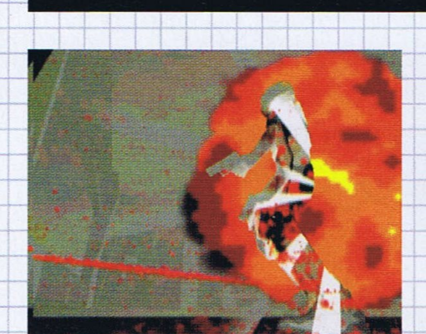



Samantha is Harman's nursemaid and part-time abuser.





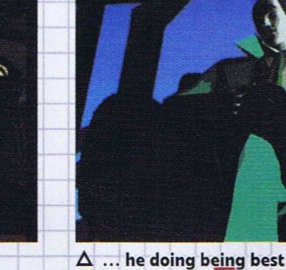
Ghosts have a strange, filtered voice – which really grates.



Dying can be a very frustrating business, particularly when it's not really your fault.



Harman is the head of the Killer 7, but what's his real motivation and what is…



… he doing being best of friends with Kun Lan, head of the Heaven's Smiles?

concentrating or paying attention to the (even weirder) dialogue, and this can end up with you feeling as though you're not really sure what you're supposed to be doing, let alone *why*. Although in *Killer 7*s defence, the various ghostly guides do give plenty of clues and the map screen does helpfully indicate which personality is required to solve the puzzles, so at least some effort has been made to help alleviate confusion.

Niggles like these *do* threaten to spoil your enjoyment of the game at intervals, but in our opinion, *Killer 7*s bravery and eccentricity win out in the end.

Sure, as a game it has its flaws. It's simplistic in that it's basically a shooting gallery broken up with puzzles, and by its very nature it's completely linear, but this is forgivable in light of the kind of experience you're getting from *Killer 7*. It's deeply unsettling at times, with a smattering of sexual content, horrendous violence and profanity. Not that such things make a good game of course, but it certainly makes for a more… (cough) 'interesting' game than *Animaniacs* or *SpongeBob SquarePants*, for example.

And so we're left with the task of giving it a score, and like we said, that is not easy. One man's breath of fresh air can so easily be another's arty-nonsense, but at the end of it all, we found ourselves left almost breathless from the journey and in awe of its conclusion.

Chances are that some of you won't get it at all, you might even hate it, but that's not to say that you don't owe it to yourself to at least *try* it. If you're anything like us, then it will almost certainly burn itself into your memory as one of this generation's most unusual and unforgettable adventures.

GERAINT EVANS

ONE OF THIS GENERATION'S MOST UNUSUAL AND UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURES



GIMPED!

Dotted around each level are a bunch of ghosts – people the Harmans have killed who now haunt them. Well, if by 'haunt' you mean 'give advice to'. Iwazaru, the red gimp, gives extensive gameplay hints. Travis gives clues for puzzles, situations and bosses, while Hoon, if you shoot his mask, will give the solution to any puzzle you're stuck on.

+

- Completely original.
- Gorgeous graphics.
- Amazingly surreal.

–

- A bit simple and a little repetitive.
- Clumsy at times.
- Poor puzzles.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Killer 7 2?
Capcom
OFF THE RADAR.
You're just going to have to wait for a possible sequel. There's nothing else like it.

9 VISUALS
What it lacks in detail, it makes up for with its art direction.

8 SOUNDS
Naughty sound bites and a mish-mash of musical styles.

7 MASTERY
It doesn't push the hardware and the game design is quite simple.

8 LIFESPAN
It's a long game, and the weird plot gives replay value.

VERDICT

A brave attempt at doing something completely different. It's not without its flaws, but you won't find anything else like it.

NGC 84

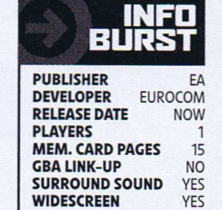
△ The combat is incredibly jerky and is ultimately unsatisfying. Batman's a wuss.

△ The enemies are so blind, they may as well wear blinkers.

△ Batman can't climb everything, unfortunately.

△ Batman also has a double jump move.

BATMAN BEGINS



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EUROCOM
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	15
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES







△ Hammering the buttons is the best method of fighting. Don't worry about combos.

Anyone for rubber suits? That's not what we meant...

Sometimes you just have to admit that you're not cut out for your career. Hate tweaking cows' nipples? Don't work on a farm. Afraid of heights? Don't be a pilot. Similarly, if all it takes to reduce you to a blubbering wreck is some scaffolding falling over nearby, you're probably not cut out to be a criminal. And if your natural instinct when you're *really* scared is to throw your away gun – the only thing that could *possibly* protect you from Batman – it's probably time to think about something else.

Batman's enemies are idiots. Not just normal 'what-was-that-noise-oh-never-mind' idiots, either – we're talking colossal dunderheads who can't notice a man in a rubber suit creeping up on them because he's *slightly* outside their tiny cone of vision. Fumbling dunces who will be all set to brain you with a crowbar one second, then inexplicably weeping on the floor the next. Real, world-class idiots.

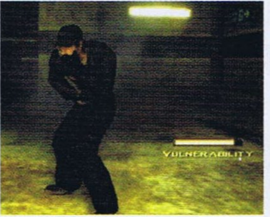
Why? Well, it's all thanks to the Area Fear system. Basically, Batman's not very tough – one quick burst with an Uzi is enough to cash in his Bat-chips for good. Instead of just, say, wearing some Kevlar, Batman deals with this by playing pranks on his foes. Cutting a rope so some boxes land near them, for instance, ups the Area Fear – which, according to the manual, is defined as 'the amount of fear in the area.' When this gets

THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS...

Or: essential tools for the discerning millionaire vigilante.



BATARANG
Batman's most versatile gadget dislodges boards, smashes windows and cuts things – but ot doesn't, as in every issue of the comic, knock guns out of enemies' hands.



SMOKE GRENADES
Once you've got an enemy upset, it's time to lob a cloud of smoke in their face. But instead of using smoke that irritates people, why not just use knockout gas?



ELECTROTOOL
Handy for hacking into devices with elaborate electronic fail-safes like cranes. Yes, you use cranes to 'sneak up' on people. Like they wouldn't notice that…



GRAPPLING HOOKS
These can only be used on special grappling points, and only if they're less than five metres away, so it takes loads of precision fiddling with the hopeless targetting system.



FLASHBANGS
Detonating half a pound of magnesium in a hood's face unsurprisingly leaves them more scared. Bizarrely, though, it only affects the person you attack.



△ Occasionally bad guys put their guard up, which necessitates an eye-watering guard-breaker shot to the kidneys.



△ It does look quite pretty…



△ … shame there's no depth to it.



△ All the neat bits are scripted.

high enough, the thugs drop their guns, leaving Batman to deal with them via some spectacularly jerky hand-to-hand combat. If a thug's fear hits critical mass, they drop to the floor and whimper until you dish out a Bat-boot to the spine.

Alternatively, he can pick certain enemies up and 'interrogate' them, which means sporadically pressing B to headbutt them until they spew out some useful info. Early on, there's a hint that you need to intimidate someone by taking advantage of their claustrophobia, but Batman just does it automatically – it's a poor cousin to the plum-threatening antics of *Metal Gear Solid*.

> **"A POOR COUSIN TO THE PLUM-THREATENING ANTICS OF METAL GEAR SOLID"**

Whimpering hardnuts aside, though, this is just a bargain-bucket version of *Splinter Cell*. Visually, it's an EA-funded eye-pleaser with blockbuster production values, kicking off with a spectacular burning building set-piece that's almost *exactly* the same as the recent *Catwoman*'s opening level.

Aurally it's a treat, with the cast all roped into doing the voicework. There's something about hearing Michael 'Alfred' Caine warning you about security cameras that never gets tired. Get under the flashy facade and it's a clunky copy of Sam Fisher's escapades, with less moves, dumber enemies, frustrating controls and tons of pointless busywork.

Case in point: the lock-picking. It's done by clicking on the tumblers as they twirl around and it's sort of okay, but it's the same puzzle every time! *Exactly* the same –



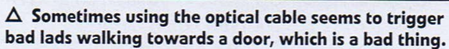
SMELL THE FEAR

One of Batman's strangest extras is the Gallery Of Fear. We thought it was just some concept art, but it's actually a big prison block that gradually fills up with enemies Batman has defeated. It's a nice idea, but it raises some questions. Like, does Batman really have his own private jail? Do we even care?



"A game that's only useful as a cautionary example"




△ **Sometimes using the optical cable seems to trigger bad lads walking towards a door, which is a bad thing.**

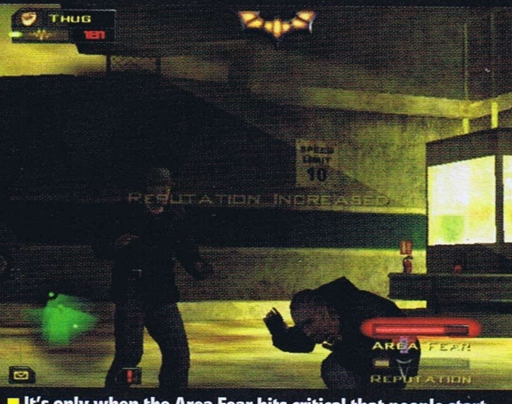




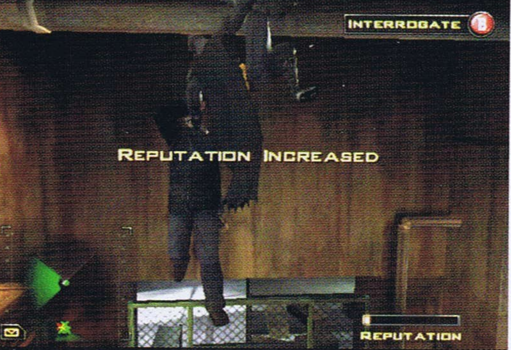


KNOW FEAR

Enemies never quite mess their trolleys, but it's amazing how scary you can look in a 'special' rubber suit.



■ **It's only when the Area Fear hits critical that people start crying – until then, they simply try to hit you with crowbars.**



■ **There's a *Splinter Cell*-style animation triggered when you're dangling above a goon. This bit's quite good, actually.**



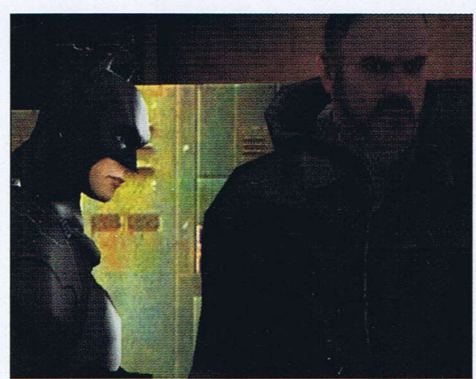
■ **Intimidate a goon enough and you can hurt them until they spill their guts. Must be murder on the arms, though.**



■ **When enemies get really scared, they start blubbering. It's supposed to be something to do with Scarecrow's fear gas...**

BATMAN BEGINS

Oh deary, deary me…



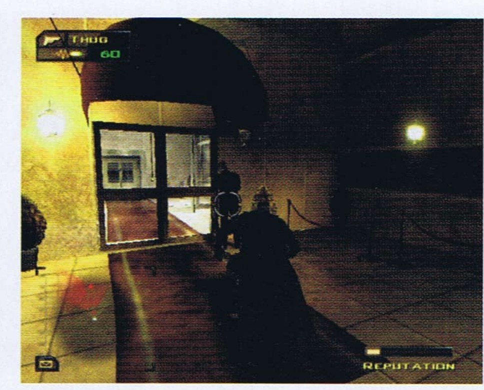
△ Further stealth stupidity – guards won't hear you punching their friend, even if they're only metres away.



△ So what happened to not killing people?



△ He's not this slippery at point blank range…



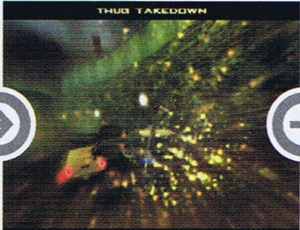
△ We're more careful entering our pin numbers than most goons walking around the Scarecrow's secret HQ.

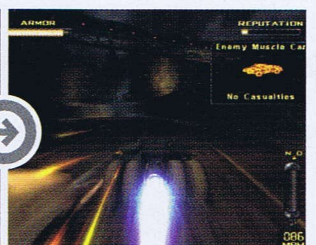


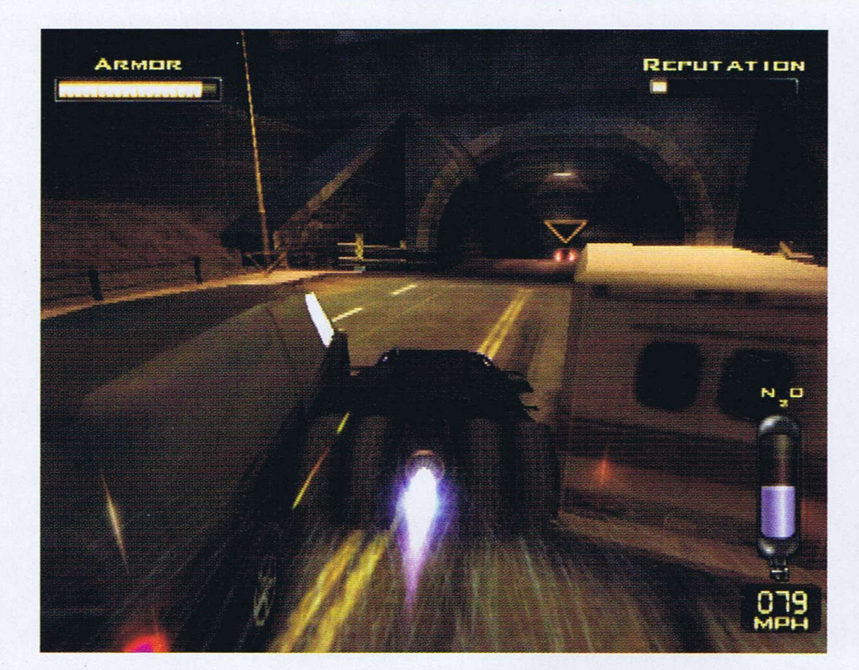
BATMOBILE!

There are driving missions that play like a Fisher-Price version of Burnout, but they're fast and vaguely entertaining. Especially when you hear a goon say, pathetically "he's taken me out" as you blow his car skywards.













reducing what ought to be an entertaining diversion into ten seconds of utterly pointless busywork. Ditto for the electro-hacking that's necessary for pressing almost *any* switch. And while we're on the subject of switches, who decided it would be a good idea to make Batman wait for lifts? He's *Batman* – it's like watching Sonic The Hedgehog sitting at a bus stop.

With none of *Spider-Man 2*'s versatility – Batman can only swing from pre-set grapple-points, and refuses to climb any ledges that the programmers don't want you on – you're reduced to wandering through a series of bland environments, twirling the camera until it locks onto the next thing you need to press/hit/grapple.



SUITS YOU

One genuinely nice touch is the chance to unlock alternative Bat-costumes by finishing the game. Our favourite is the grey-on-black Dark Knight look popularised by Frank Miller, but for retro comedy value there's always the 60s look – light grey and blue, with a big yellow target on the chest. Sadly, it doesn't affect your fear rating.

There was one bit where we kept jumping off a ledge towards a group of villains and dying because Batman hit an invisible wall and plummeted into some water (Batman can't swim, obviously). We then realised that it wasn't working because the villains weren't scared enough – as soon as we'd thrown a crate at them, Batman cleared the jump like a gazelle on a trampoline.

Inconsistencies like this drain any feeling of achievement out of it – almost every action is pre-scripted, so there's no coming up with inventive ways to terrify gangsters. Toss in some dreadful level structure, insane puzzle logic and some horribly unforgiving bits, and you've got a game that's only useful as a cautionary example.

> "THERE'S NO COMING UP WITH INVENTIVE WAYS TO TERRIFY GANGSTERS"

One more piece of career advice – if you have to rely on idiots dropping their guns because you've pushed over a bookshelf, you *really* shouldn't be thinking about becoming a superhero.

JOEL SNAPE



- Presented with a fair degree of polish.
- Video clips of Katie Holmes.

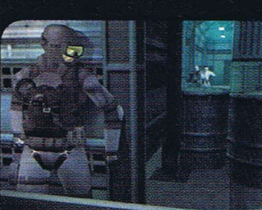


- Stupid, illogical puzzles.
- Batman refuses to do what he's told.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

MGS: Twin Snakes
Konami
NGC/91 90%
Want to scare someone? Aim a tranquiliser gun at their groin until they cry.



7 VISUALS
Typically polished, but let down by the bland scenery.

5 SOUNDS
Two people have the same conversation *ten times.*

3 MASTERY
Like *Splinter Cell* for babies, designed in twenty minutes.

4 LIFESPAN
You could complete it in five hours, almost none of it fun.

VERDICT

Feels more like work than fun – look at *Spider-Man 2* to see how superhero games *should* be done.







△ The framerate is remarkably solid, despite all the explosions and soldiers that are present on-screen at any time.



△ For once, the British soldiers aren't all stereotypically portrayed as stiff-upper-lipped gents or cockney geezers.



△ Sniping is often pointless as the enemy will keep respawning.

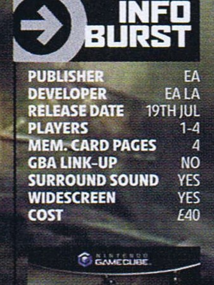


△ Since the enemy don't respond to fire you can't suppress them.



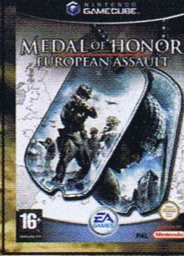
△ Although the battles seem epic, most of it is just wallpaper, sadly.

MEDAL OF HONOR EUROPEAN ASSAULT



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA LA
RELEASE DATE	19TH JUL
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



One Yank defeats the Nazis

Welcome to MOH: European Insult.



The tracer fire overhead lights up the night sky like a swarm of angry fireflies as you tear across the snow and flatten yourself against the farmhouse wall. Breathing hard, you almost try to burrow into the rough stone as the MG42 inside continues to chew up your cowering comrades on the slope below.

Shouldering your Thompson, you prime a grenade and pause as PFC Ramirez arrives panting at your side. The pin is pulled and the Krauts scatter when the explosive is lobbed through the door. As you cringe in anticipation of the blast, your clueless comrade rushes into the room, kicks your grenade back outside and ends your life in a storm of shrapnel. But before your corpse slumps to the earth, you just catch a glimpse of the suicidal grunt as he too crumples under a hail of bullets.

But this sad story doesn't end by a barn in the middle of the battle of the Bulge because a precious Revive has suddenly allowed you to lurch to your feet like some kind of zombie, ready to take on the evil Nazi war machine once again. But as you desperately struggle against the unbelievably naff controls to summon a gun, an unharmed Nazi clubs you to death with his rifle butt.

"THIS SAD STORY DOESN'T END IN A BARN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE..."

△ **Tanks keep on appearing throughout the game, but they are weak, feeble, immobile, ugly and mostly harmless. As a result, they're remarkably easy to defeat.**

"It certainly shouldn't be laughable, but it is"

Somehow, the huge floating bullet and health icons spoil any feelings of gritty realism.

There is absolutely no connection between you and the team, and as a result there's almost no character development at all.

That was a Medal Of Honor™ moment and *European Assault* is packed with them. For while the game is designed to make you feel like a war hero – firm of jaw, Brylcreemed of hair and stiff of upper lip – you are instead left shaking your head, cursing your AI driven friends and chuckling at the enemies' stupidity.

Take the tank battle at the climax of the first campaign. After a long fight through the occupied town of St. Nazaire, this final encounter should be something fearsome, something testing, something impressive. It certainly shouldn't be laughable, but it is when the blandly textured Panzer tank grumbles into view. Looking as menacing as an immobile off-white box, it pivots slowly as you dance around throwing endless grenades, safe in the knowledge that this titan of the blitzkrieg can't harm you.

From the suicidal SS generals who stand still as you repeatedly hit them with headshots to the soldiers who throw grenades at snipers half a mile away, or the friendly AI that makes your GI pals locate the nearest crossfire and stand in it – there are plenty of examples of excruciatingly embarrassing encounters in *European Assault*. Many of them are big enough to puncture any feelings of credibility the game managed to create.



AMERICAN IDIOT

The story is told through voiceovers from an aged agent and the same chap when he was younger. That coffin-dodger is you, Oliver Holt who, like Man U's David May, seems to turn up at every European victory. So off you go to raid a French port, relieve the besieged city of Stalingrad, fight in North Africa and assault the Ardennes.

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

About half a step in the right direction



△ The Germans don't like to use cover. Instead, they will frequently stand up and wait to get shot, which is a bit stupid…



△ The missions all revolve around blowing things up, and none of them feature vehicles.



△ The music is excellent, but some of the weapons sound a little lacklustre.

SQUAD-U-LIKE

With so many games appearing featuring new tactical elements, EA only seem to have made a half-hearted attempt to add this kind of depth and sophistication to MOH: EA.



Like *Call Of Duty*, you can heal your squad with medical supplies. Which seems a waste when all this rewards you with is more medical supplies.



Like many other squad-based shooters, you can direct your team. Sadly, you can't order them to throw grenades, take cover or set up covering fire.



Since the command icon becomes confused by different floors and can only go about ten feet away, the ability to issue orders is largely pointless.



Because you don't have to rely on or protect these grunts, their inability to follow orders isn't that frustrating, and they do have their useful moments.

But while these horrors exist, there have also been enough improvements since the formulaic *Frontline* and the average *Rising Sun* to make the bits between the embarrassments at least promising.

> **MANY OF THE LEVELS STILL RELY ON PILES OF RUBBLE TO STOP YOU EXPLORING**

Missing in action are the on-rails sections, while the equally constrictive tunnel-style level design has also been dispatched. They have been replaced with open arenas that allow you to pick a rough route across the desert or forest floor, or even hang back and use the new lean movement to snipe. And what's more in these expanded war-zones, the enemy can now exist off-screen and behind you, making the often epic battles far more convincing and breathless. Finally the single objectives have been supplemented with secondary missions that should encourage you to explore the four war zones of France, North Africa, Russia and Belgium.

Which all sounds very laudable, unless you remember that most other first person shooters haven't waited for their third incarnations to include such elementary innovation. Instead they have moved the whole genre on, adding more features than Michael Jackson, while *MOH: EA* has signed up to them mostly in name only. So most of these new multiple objectives consist of tasks that have to be performed anyway before you can complete the main objective. Many of the levels still rely on piles of rubble to stop you exploring their narrow streets, and much of the atmosphere-building scale of the battles is just background fireworks.

Some of the other new elements are even less of a success. The ability to command a squad and to





ACTHUNG UP

The controls are a bit of a mixed bag, with the blessing of the lean system and the frustration of having your grenades selected by the same button as your two guns. And so you need to pause between wanting to lob a grenade, actually throwing it, and following up by firing your SMG. A pause which the Germans will happily allow you. As if.

"MOH:EA retreads familiar territory"



NUREMBERK

Designed to make the battle for Europe more personal, these Wehrmacht warriors appear in each level, forming the mid-level bosses. Seemingly drawn from a crack SS suicidal squad, their mission seems to involve standing completely still and letting you shoot them repeatedly in the head, reloading and shooting again. Which is probably why one American can successfully take on the entire German army.

△ The enemy AI is less scripted, but they will only appear when you hit certain trigger points.

△ Direct hit, you idiots. Just call me deadeye.

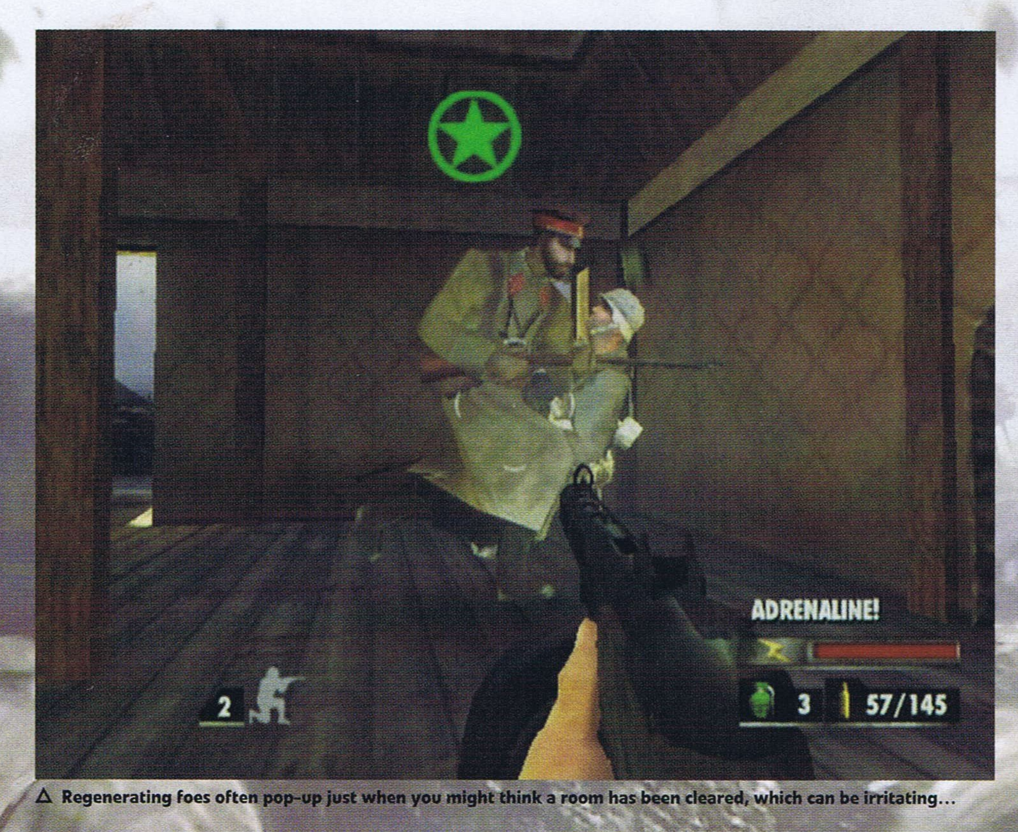
△ The final level offers the most in the way of action, so why are the rest so sparse?

give orders is almost non-existent. Accessed through the D-pad, your men have two commands: 'Go there' or 'Come here'. Sadly they aren't that good at following either. Not that it matters, because the enemy AI won't respond to their advances, so you can't send them too far ahead as the Nazis inside won't be triggered until you yourself approach. Instead these bullet sponges merely follow like a pack of yapping collies on elastic, bounding straight into the line of fire, and leading you to ignore them.

The Adrenaline mode, which has been designed to reward headshots, is also largely redundant. Being invincible for around 15 seconds could be useful, except it slows down time for both you and the Germans. So instead of making a heroic dash, you stumble clumsily into no-man's land only for the red-tinged effect to run out 25 metres short of your target.

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

About half a step in the right direction



△ Regenerating foes often pop-up just when you might think a room has been cleared, which can be irritating…











■ Open areas.
■ A stirring score.
■ A bit better than last time.



■ Unvarying pace.
■ Badly laid out controls.
■ Clueless bosses.



Call Of Duty: Finest Hour
Activision
NGC/102 75%
It's not that much better, but at least it's consistent.





The backdrops work, but the soldiers and tanks are dull.



An excellent score bolsters some great shooting effects.

6 MASTERY

An incredible mixture of both solid and sloppy execution.

6 LIFESPAN

It's very short and the bot-free multiplayer is good.

VERDICT

The bold step in a new direction has proven little more than a shuffle. Despite an overhaul, the series is showing its age.





THERE'S NO AIIIEEE IN TEAM



UBER ALLIES

There are three basic multiplayer modes: Axis Versus Allies, Deathmatch and Free For All. Taking place over 15 maps, these options can be modified and tinkered with to suit your needs.



NO BOTTLE

Despite each option being playable with up to four friends on the machine, the lack of bots means you don't want to keep playing. But, even with multiple mates, the action is still fluid.



SCHNELL THE LOVE

With plenty of Flag, King Of The Hill and demolition-style missions, there are loads of options. And for the team battles, there are quite a few different skins to choose from.



THE GOLDEN SHOT

Meet Your Nemesis echoes GoldenEye's Golden Gun option by giving one player the advantage of the bazooka, but the problem of their location appearing on the radar.

And when your Adrenaline 'rush' leaves you short and shot, the Revive system comes into play. Replacing checkpoints, it allows you to carry on from the moment your corpse hit the ground without restarting the level. Sadly, it too can hinder as much as it helps. After all, being killed is usually a sign that something went wrong, so putting you back in the same situation with no extra ammo, very little health and only a second of invincibility just makes the bile rise.

> **"PROGRESS, BUT PROGRESS INTO LONG SINCE OCCUPIED TERRITORY"**

The removal of the checkpoint system could have another use, though – to mask the incredibly short Solo mode. After all, there are only 11 missions in the game and that includes the danger-free tutorial of St. Nazaire. So even on the Normal difficulty setting, you should be able to reach the final pair of missions (including completing all of the bonus missions) inside of a day. Even if the final battles do take much longer due to a sudden, dramatic and, to be honest, mildly unfair increase in difficulty.

It has been almost two years since *Rising Sun* sank, and while other WW2 FPS's have moved forward with the speed of the blitzkrieg, *MOH: EA*'s promised features are undeveloped, under-used or underwhelming. And while it is technically solid, the lack of graphical detail, along with the angular character design and fuzziness, smack of a half-hearted, sloppy conversion. But if you can ignore some of the atmosphere destroying flaws and the gimmicky extras then the open battlefields, the lean feature and feeling like a part of a World War feels like progress, but progress into long since occupied territory.

ALEX COOKE



RUSSIAN AND GUN

Having only 11 levels has a knock-on effect in the game's pacing. For while the first campaign provides a gentle start that gradually builds, the later levels have no ebb and flow. Set-piece battle follows set-piece battle without the quiet moments that make you enjoy the more intense ones.

ADVANCE WARS DS

Will this be the best DS game yet?

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CRAFTY BEGGARS

For some people there just isn't enough merchandise...

For a multinational corporation whose main goal is to deposit the money from your pocket into its own bank account, Nintendo doesn't half attract some big love. We've rounded up nine people who have turned their passion for The Big N into something they could hold, touch and dangle in front of bemused friends. So meet some of Nintendo's most fanatical fans, and see if you can conceal your trembling jealousy as you gaze at what they've done with thread, glue, paint, Lego and, in one case, human skin.

Super Mario Bros. Mural

Sarah Millman, 20, from New York, USA. Sarah splattered Nintendo all over her nice clean wall as part of a project for her Art and Design course, and filmed the whole thing from start to finish. Her professor "loved it." Good thing too, as she was spitting paint until 4am on the day of her final exam to get it done. That's Mario love, right there.

Time Spent: One day priming and two nights painting. We call it 'speedspray'.

Helping Hand: The Pepsi Cola Corporation. "I drank a lot of Mountain Dew while working on this. I'm hoping Mountain Dew will be my sponsor when Nintendo sues me for copyright infringement."

Insider's Tip: Make time. "It may not have been the smartest idea to paint an entire mural during final exams week."

Up Next: Sarah's wild-eyed friends want the whole room done, but "that's a little extreme." Instead, Goombas and Fire Flowers are next out of the spray can.

Random Fact: Mario was planned in advance, while the pipe and bricks were ad-libbed.

Shopping List: Certified spray paint, six colours: £15
Blue painter's tape: £2
Face mask and filters: £13-30
Coffee: £3

NES Controller Chair

Emily Matthias, 23, from Southern Utah, USA.
Clearly your gaming set-up isn't complete unless you're actually sitting on Nintendo. Emily's enticing tribute to the NES was the result of several painful hours spent sticking needles through vinyl. "Let the Nintendo-related projects spew forth in abundance!" an excited fan has yabbered.

Time Spent: Five hours. "Vinyl is heavy in large pieces, and it kept trying to slide off the table as I was sewing."

Helping Hand: We can thank Emily's boss, who donated an old chair for free, following an office refurbishment. Thank you Emily's boss!

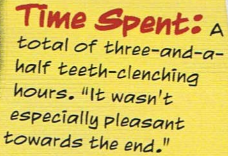
Insider's Tip: Try not to roll your eyes at the ways of the old folks, "My mom saw it and asked if it was some kind of avant-garde design that I just made up. She isn't too familiar with Nintendo."

Up Next: A matching chair is already on the go as we speak, and Emily is also planning Koopa Trooper throw cushions.

Random Fact: Emily was prompted to make it after seeing Ilia's purse (SEE PAGE 87).

Shopping List:
Chair frame: free
Vinyl fabric: £2.50
Foam padding: £10

Nintendo Tattoos



Rick Thorpe, 32, from Belmont, Australia.
After losing his heart to Nintendo in the '90s, Rick knew he would also be giving up his skin. Phantom Ganon is ink-credible (ha!), but there's also the *Soul Calibur II* sword, *Metal Gear*'s Psycho Mantis and a Resi zombie. Kids: don't try this at home. Or anywhere else for that matter.







Time Spent: A total of three-and-a-half teeth-clenching hours. "It wasn't especially pleasant towards the end."

Helping Hand: Patto and Duane of Australian Ink Spot in Geelong. "Patto does a lot of my custom work and has a style I really love."

Insider's Tip: What is it that makes a good tattoo? "I've seen a phenomenal *Wind Waker* back job, and lots of Triforces. It's really up to the individual viewer what looks good."

Up Next: A *Wind Waker* Redead, one of those barking Chain Chomps, and "a whole lower leg filled in with *Wind Waker*-style smoke and light effects."

Random Fact: We forgot to ask Rick if he has a GBA:SP Tribal Edition. He probably does.

Shopping List:
Rusty needles and ink: £2.99
A lifetime of regret: Priceless





CRAFTY BEGGARS

"Not all German people like David Hasselhoff"



"Jawa Gamecrawler"

Steve Perry, 33, from Stoke-On-Trent.
Steve snatched an original 1977 Star Wars Sandcrawler off eBay, gutted it, and filled it up with a Gamecube, an N64 and (because it was all that would fit) a '70s-era Atari VCS. An odd collection, but be thankful Steve decided to turn his back on the dark side; he originally wanted to put in a Playstation 2.

Time Spent: Six months, although that was on and off.

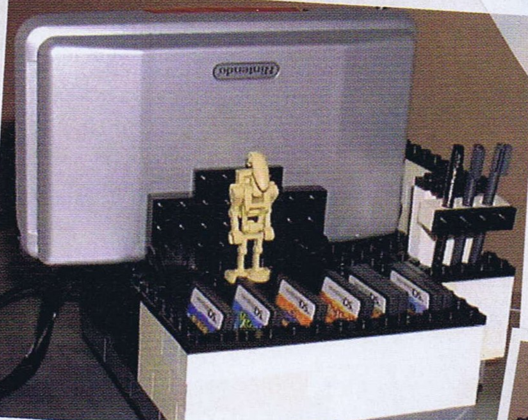
Helping Hand: 'Ironing' courtesy of Steve's mates. "My friends test my new projects and give brutal yet constructive feedback, so that any problems are ironed out before posting on the net."

Insider's Tip: "The N64 is upside-down at the bottom of the Gamecrawler to enable the Expansion Pack to drop down between the tracks." He's thinking, that man.

Up Next: No Nintendo console is safe from Steve's wandering hands. "Maybe another one with a Super Nintendo, NES or Revolution. Perhaps I'll move away from Star Wars."

Random Fact: Steve's favourite Star Wars movie is the original. He was six when he first saw it.

Shopping List:
Nintendo Gamecube: £45
N64: £30
Atari VCS 2600: £20
Jawa Sandcrawler: £56
Paints: £10
Cabling: £10
Gamebit tool: £8
Fans: £8



Lego Nintendo DS Dock



Josh Hendrix, 24, from North Carolina, USA.
Refusing to open his wallet for overpriced DS docks in the shops, Josh toyed with the idea of making his own. Then Lego Star Wars fever took hold, the bulb went on over Steve's head, and the slightly Star Wars-Related Lego Nintendo DS Charger Dock was born.

Time Spent: Two afternoons.

Helping Hand: Only black and white Lego is 'street' enough for Josh. "The first dock I built was randomly coloured and looked like a child's toy."

Insider's Tip: "The plug is a very tight fit, so working around it was tedious. I had to make sure there's room below it for the cord to curve off around the back."

Up Next: Josh is now the lord god of a full-on Lego-dock fad that's all his doing. "One guy used medieval Lego to create a Fire Emblem theme."

Random Fact: Josh also built a small Lego easel for his DS to solve the old 'three hands' problem. But it evolved into "a stand for my 'other' handheld." Boo.

Shopping List:
B&W Lego: £5
Coloured Lego (unwanted): £55

Jonathan, 28, and Shell Arkell, 37, from Calgary, Canada.
Not bad, eh? Jonathan and Shell have decided to try their luck selling these hats online. So if you like what you see, point your clicker at www.sleepykitty.ca and put your money where your mouth is. Expect passers-by to point out that you're wearing a mushroom on your head, mind.

Time Spent: "Days and days," although production did speed up after the first hat was done and dusted.

Helping Hand: Jonathan and Shell use their daughter as a model. "That hat ends up going right over her head, so she can't see at all. She'll start to walk around, narrowly miss a wall or another obstacle, pause, look around, put the hat back on and walk around some more. Very cute."

Insider's Tip: "Small children shouldn't be around when you're making the hats, lest you ruin their innocent little minds with the profanity."

Up Next: The pair welcome ideas for new hats at their website. Yoshiegg yoshieggyoshiegg.

Random Fact: Jonathan wore the 1-Up hat to a club night, and "because it's UV reactive, it looked like this mushroom was bobbing up and down on the dance floor. Quite a sight apparently!"

Shopping List:
Materials: £10
Dignity: £1





Mushroom Hats



NES Controller Purse

Ilia S Muschler from Missouri, USA.
Another vinyl-aided craft project, and the perfect place for the three pennies you have left over from your life savings after completing your NES Classics collection. Don't be surprised if you see Paris Hilton stepping out with one of these at the next celeb party. Or not.

Time Spent: A week.

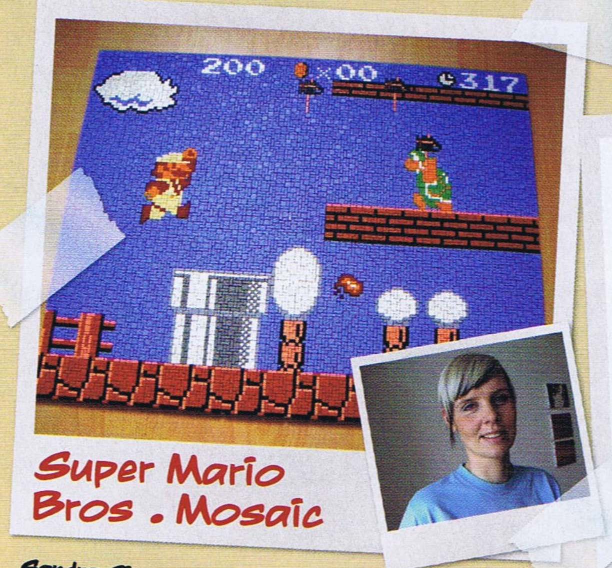
Helping Hand: A glue gun. "Vinyl is very funny. You can't use pins on it to make unsewn pieces stay together. For the controller face, I ended up hot-glueing all the pieces in place while I stitched them with the machine."

Insider's Tip: "I had to buy leather needles and upholstery thread just to stitch all of the vinyl parts together. Do not use normal cotton thread - it will just break. I learnt the hard way!"

Up Next: Go on, do a Nintendo cartridge purse. "Yeah, I just got into silk screening, so I'm thinking a cartridge wallet would be great."

Random Fact: Ilia's middle name is simply 'S'. "My parents are weird."

Shopping List:
Purse: A gift
Vinyl: £9
Cotton: £1



Super Mario Bros . Mosaic

Sandra Simon, 29, from Germany.
The girlfriend of **NGC**'s euro-hopping freelance layabout Mark Green, Sandy made this colossal Mario screenshot as Mark's Christmas present. Constructed from a German toy called MiniSteck, it's a whopper at 66cm by 54cm. Mark, in turn, gave Sandy a pair of socks.

Time Spent: Around 50 hours spread over two weeks. "9000 pieces, you hear? It required some force to push each piece into the backboard. My fingers felt like they were in hell."

Helping Hand: Intimidated German shop assistants. "I drastically underestimated the number of blue pieces I'd need for the massive amount of sky. I ended up driving around Frankfurt, pestering shop assistants for any leftovers they had."

Insider's Tip: To be spoken in the style of Mr Alan Sugar: "never, ever, ever underestimate the number of pieces."

Up Next: With her fingers still bleeding profusely, Sandy is planning another mosaic - this time of a *Super Mario Bros.* castle level.

Random Fact: Sandy claims that, contrary to popular belief, not all German people actually like David Hasselhoff.

Shopping List:
Backboards: £7
MiniSteck pieces: £70
Fans: £8



Zelda Game Boy Advance SP Cozy

Mary Parsons, 16, from Florida, USA.
Voted cooler than a *Halo* watch in an online contest, the Zelda cozy keeps your Game Boy Advance SP safe from wind, cold and happy-slapping. Mary says that "this is the one thing that might get the typical gamer-geek teen or twenty-something to buy a pair of knitting needles."

Time Spent: Just a couple of days.

Helping Hand: The fat dots that old games are made out of were a big plus. "Giant pixels lend themselves nicely to crafts. I've also made a *Space Invaders* scarf. The hip, young knitters of today tend to love videogame themes."

Insider's Tip: You need an intimate knowledge of the ancient knitting technique known as Intarsia. "It's a multi-colour knitting skill, but any experienced knitter can put out a quality product."

Up Next: More to come this summer. Because "knitting videogames is nearly as addictive as playing them."

Random Fact: One fan has commented, "YOU ARE LIKE GOD!!!!!"

Shopping List:
Sheep: £20

YOU'RE NEXT!

Do you own every Nintendo game ever made - even *Kirby Air Ride*? Have you converted your basement into a shrine to Reggie 'Call Me Fees-oh-May' Fils-Aime? Are you wearing dungarees? From next issue we're giving you the chance to show how you're paying tribute to the great lord Nintendo. Send photos as proof - Yoshi biscuits, papier mâché Princess Peach masks, your dad's moustache-based tribute to Wario, anything - to **NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Fame and fortune will be yours! Well, fame. Of sorts.





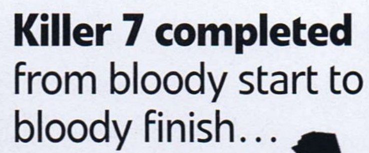
Get the Soul Shells, kill the Smiles and, erm, find the disembodied heads.

KILLER 7



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

You take control of Harman, a man who has an entire team of elite assassins inside his head. Your enemies are the terrorist group/weird monster thingies called Heaven's Smiles. The gameplay is primarily based on puzzles and shooting, and we're here to show you the way through *Killer 7* in its entirity.



Killer 7 completed from bloody start to bloody finish...











WHAT WE SAID IN THIS ISSUE!

Dark, bloody and downright weird, Killer 7 sets out to be as different from everything that has gone before as possible. And it succeeds. Although it will irritate some, those open-minded enough will love it.

NGC 84



ANGEL

Your first destination should be the parking lot. In here you'll find a nest that drops rolling eggs. Shoot these to release an invisible Smile. Scan it to reveal it and then kill it. You need to shoot the yellow weak spot on the nest to stop it from dropping Smiles. The quickest way to do this is to use Dan's charged shots. At its maximum power (three charges) it can take down the nest with one hit, but before you do this, it might be a good idea to let it lay a few eggs so you can rack up some extra blood and kills.

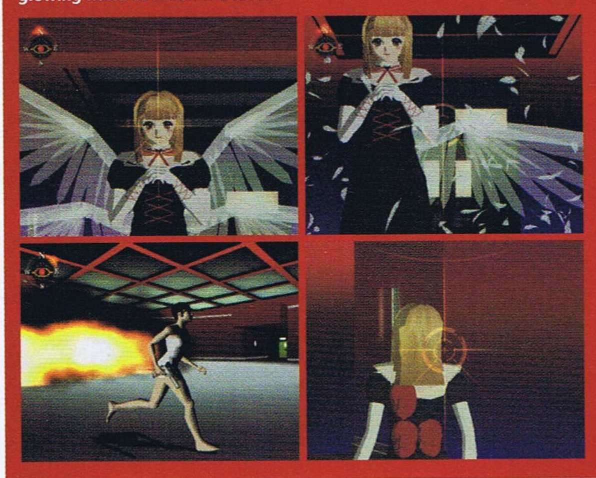
Once you've dispatched the Nest, push forward and talk to Travis. He will unlock the car boot so you can pick up your first Soul Shell. By now, you should have scored quite a few kills from the eggs and received some blood. It might be a good idea to head back to the first save point, wake up any characters who are asleep and convert all your blood into serum to power up your characters.

Once you've saved, head to the third floor, then to the library and then to the laundry room. Go to the drying machine and turn it off. Inside you'll find a head with the Fire Ring in its mouth. Listen to what he has to say and take it. Now change to Coyote and use him to unlock the padlock at the end of the corridor. You'll now be back in the hallway where room 212 is. Enter room 212 and equip the Fire Ring. You now need to use it on the candles and simply light them in numerical order. If for some reason you mess this up, use the air conditioner to blow them out and start again. Light the candles correctly and you'll open up the shelves to your right. Inside you'll find an odd engraving.

Next up, head to the rest room on the third floor. Remember that the enemies in the room preceding it will have respawned, so be careful when you get there. Enter the rest room and use the Fire Ring on the sprinkler to fill the toilet in the cubicle with water. Head to the toilet and flush it. This will make another odd engraving fall out of a broken pipe in the laundry room. Go back there, retrieve it and make your way back to the library.

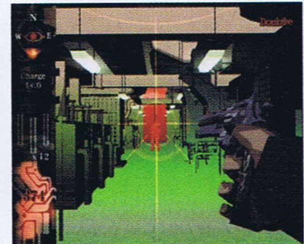
BOSS!

This is pretty simple, really. Use Harman to take out the Angel's wings with his rifle. When she gets back up, change to Kaede and then wait. Angel will start launching fireballs at you. You need to start moving the second you see the little flash of light in the palm of her hand. As soon as you see it, run behind her and use Kaede's scope to shoot the faces off Angel's back. Once Angel is defeated, head to the next room and, using Harman's rifle, wait until you see Kun Lan appear and then shoot him. After the cutscene, shoot Kun's glowing hand to finish the level.









You need to use both odd engravings in the control panel in the library. This will open up the bookcases, giving you access to the fourth floor. For this area you need to change to Kaede. There are two dead-ends in this section. One has red graffiti on the wall – use Kaede's special ability to reveal the word NO – and the other is a pinky-red wall. Again, use Kaede's special ability to break the barrier wall, revealing the second Soul Shell.

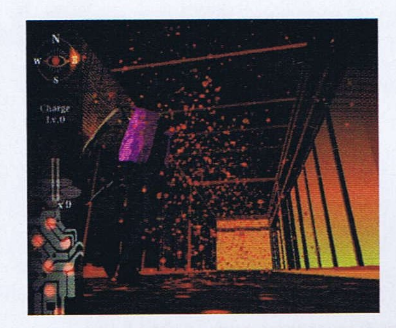
Head to the entrance to the 5th floor boiler room. Enter 'NO' into the safe-like lock, then continue to the gatekeeper and hand over the Soul Shells. This will give you access to the Vinculum Gate. Keep pushing forward for a mini-boss in the shape of the Speed Smile. Change to Con and keep pumping him full of bullets until he falls. Now take the lift to the final boss fight.



SUNSET: PART 1

First off, you need to go to Harman's room, select the TV and then select Harman to trigger the cutscene. Now head outside the trailer to trigger the next cutscene before the level begins proper.

Walk through the game and up to the rock blocking the doorway. Destroy it and you'll enter the restaurant. Before you get any deeper into the level, cut back the way you came and head around the side of the restaurant to find Harman's room. Save in here, then re-enter the restaurant and proceed to the waiting room. Walk to the end of the room and use Coyote's special ability to jump up to the attic. Head out onto the roof and run along to the end to find a small room. Select the door case to talk to the head that's holding the Water Ring.



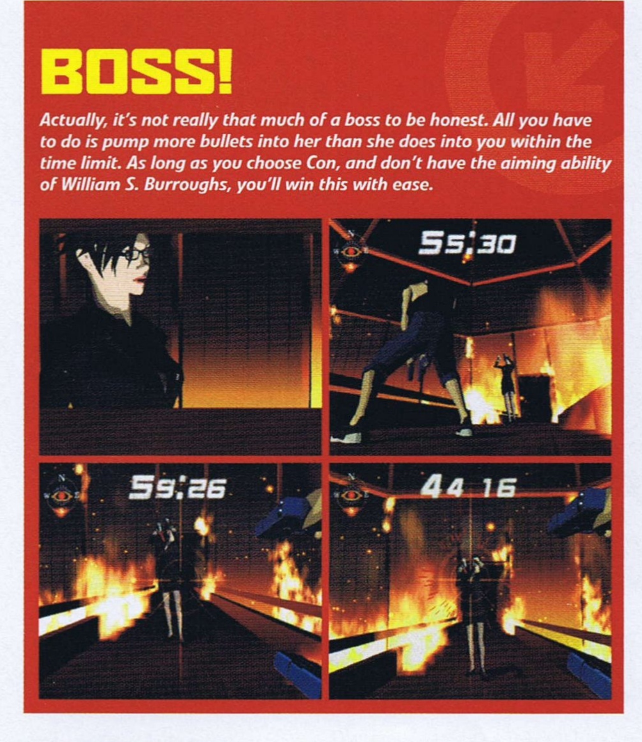
Now go back the way you came, along the roof and back down to the waiting room. You now need to head over to the courtyard, into the next building, up the stairs and into the guest room. Equip the Water Ring and then select the vase you find in the room – this will change the blossom on the painting, allowing you to get the Odd Engraving.

Head down the stairs and into an area with some big statues. Keep moving through the corridors until you reach a door with a slot in it – this is for the Odd Engraving. Head through the door and



BOSS!

Actually, it's not really that much of a boss to be honest. All you have to do is pump more bullets into her than she does into you within the time limit. As long as you choose Con, and don't have the aiming ability of William S. Burroughs, you'll win this with ease.



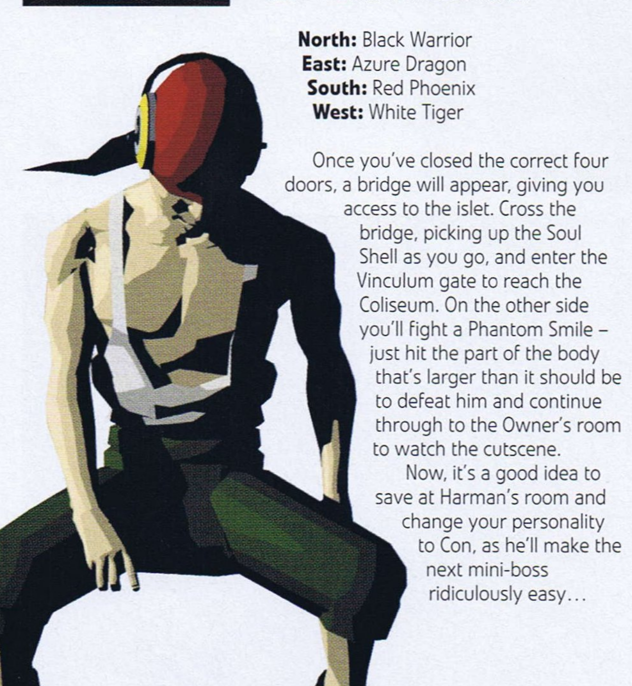




you'll eventually reach a corridor that's blocked off by fire. Change personality to Mask de Smith, as he will be able to break through the wood that's blocking off the entrance to the kitchen. Watch the cutscene in here and then go back to the corridor. The fire will now have died down enough for you to get past.

The next main area is the Detached Rooms. Right at the start of this section you'll find a Feng Shui map which gives you clues to the next puzzle. You need to enter each of the rooms to the north, south, east and west, and close the right door. The solution is as follows:

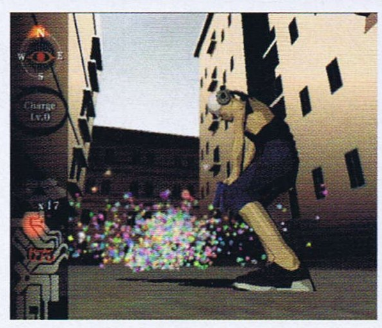
North: Black Warrior
East: Azure Dragon
South: Red Phoenix
West: White Tiger

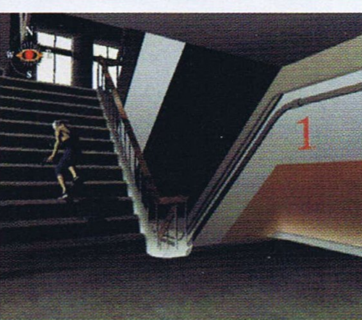


Once you've closed the correct four doors, a bridge will appear, giving you access to the islet. Cross the bridge, picking up the Soul Shell as you go, and enter the Vinculum gate to reach the Coliseum. On the other side you'll fight a Phantom Smile – just hit the part of the body that's larger than it should be to defeat him and continue through to the Owner's room to watch the cutscene.

Now, it's a good idea to save at Harman's room and change your personality to Con, as he'll make the next mini-boss ridiculously easy...







SUNSET: PART 2

Once again, enter Harman's room to trigger a cutscene and then head outside the trailer to start the level proper. You will now be outside the Kaku Building. First of all, inspect the car and make a note of the letters on the windscreen before clearing the area of enemies to reach the vending machine. You need to select the drinks with the same initials (BTJ, CSC, WTS) as you saw on the car. This will move the vending machine to one side – giving you access to the Kaku Building.

Cut through the store room and then, after taking out the Smiles, head to the Superintendent's room. Switch to Coyote and unlock the padlock on the control panel. Flip the switch inside then head out of the room and around the corner to the left to Room 105. You'll find a bowl with some dice in. Keep rolling the dice until you roll a double one, which will unlock your first Soul Shell from the drawer.



Go up the stairs to the second floor and bear right. Continue up the hall to the next junction. Enter the room to find the cards. You need to turn the 9 card over to get the winning hand. This will unlock the second Soul Shell from the drawer. Take it and make your way to the third floor.

Head down the left-hand corridor. Take a look at the poster of the horses and make a note of the winning race order (1, 4, 3, 7, 6, 2, 5). Go back out of the room, around the corner to the left and into the room at the end of the corridor. Go to the horse race machine and enter the race details before selecting 'S'. This will unlock the third Soul Shell from the drawer.

Change to Coyote and head over to Room 301. Use his special ability to jump up to a room on the fourth floor to find the Odd Engraving. Jump back down to the third floor and then take the stairs back up to the fourth floor. The next puzzle is a bit of a strange one. You need to look at the posters of women and beer on the wall of the corridor dead ahead as you come up from the stairs, and make a note of the animal on the poster and the pattern of the leaves. Go to the room down the other corridor and match the patterns and animals on the cards you find there. Once you have matched the colours correctly, you'll unlock the fourth Soul Shell. You now need to change personality to Kevin so that you can use his special invisibility skill to get past the security lasers.

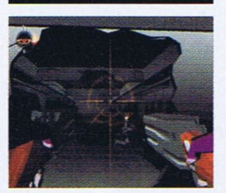
BOSS!

If you spend all your time hitting the brains these two zombie politicians throw at you, then you're going to be hanging around all day. If you've got plenty of healing vials (which you should have by now) it's best to just use those to soak up the damage. Your first task is to shoot the tie of the right-most politician. This will make the politician on the left lean over to adjust it – exposing his brain as he does so. This is the weak spot. Depending on how much Kaede's been powered up, you should be able to take him out in two or three shots. Once he's out of the way, the other politician will launch three brains at you at a time. You need to shoot two out of the three to get the remaining politician to expose his brain. The best way to get a shot in the short time-frame is to shoot two brains, zoom back out and then zoom in on the exposed brain. Again, two or three shots will seem him defeated.



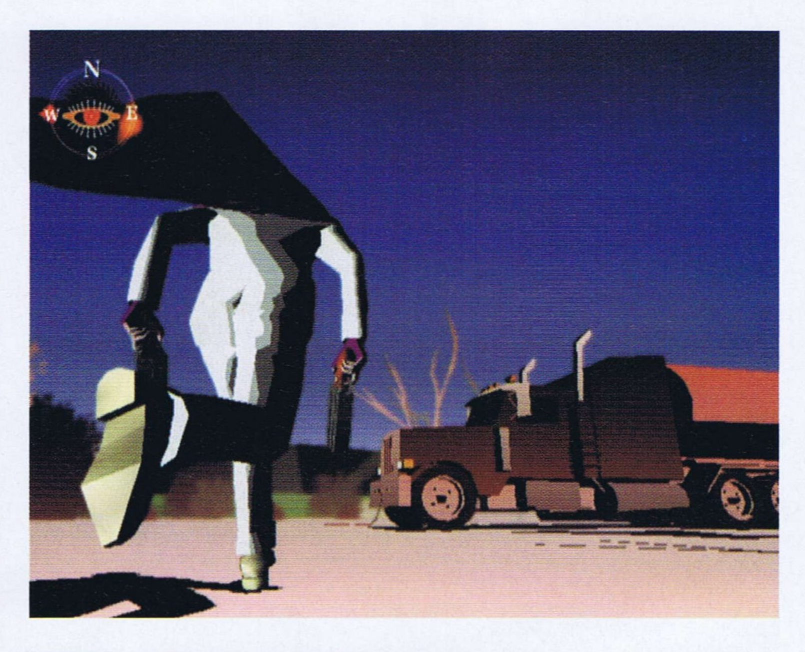
Continue forward and you'll come against a new type of Smile – the Back Smile. You need to shoot its arms to get it to spin around, before shooting its weak spot. We found Dan to be pretty handy for this task. Once defeated, save at Harman's room, change to Mask de Smith and head up the lift for a battle with the chef you met on the previous level. In order to beat him, you need to shoot the cracked concrete beam over his head, because normal bullets won't hurt him. Now go to the Mahjong room, watch the cutscene, get the Wind Ring from the head in the cardboard box and then access the control panel with the Odd Engraving you found earlier. Change the setting so the lift goes to the top floor, then head back to the lift to access the roof. Change to Kaede and use the Wind Ring on the red curtain to your left (you'll hear the 'something interesting' guitar sample here) to access the board room.









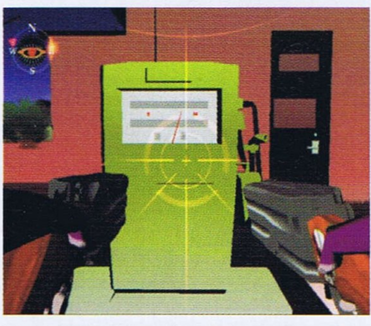


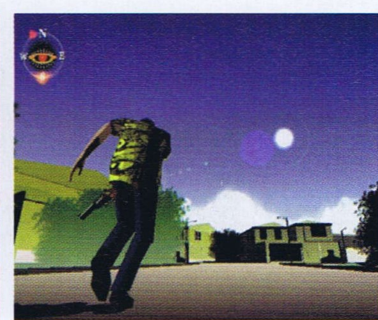
CLOUDMAN

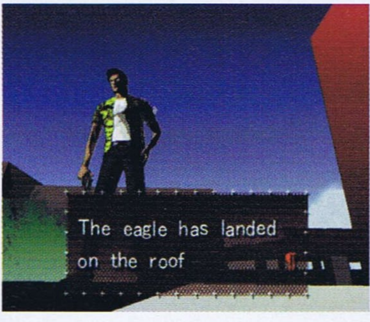
Head into the town and spend some time racking up plenty of blood and kills from the respawning enemies. Once you're satisfied, head to Harman's room down the street and save before changing characters to Mask de Smith. Your next destination is the Gas Station across the street. Run around to the front of the tanker and use Mask to pull it out of the way of the gas tank. Head around to the petrol pump to find another head holding the Stamina Ring. Next, speak to Travis. He is outside the gas station. Be sure to make a note of the word HUSTLE, which is written on his t-shirt – it's the password for a locked door later in the level. Now head north to get to the next area.

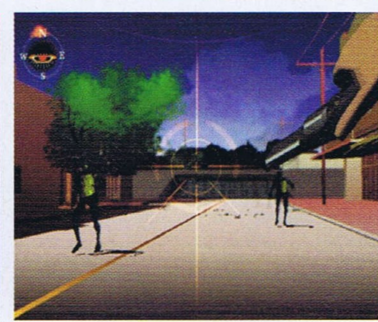
Your next destination should be the suburbs, which is to the left. Change personalities to Coyote and use his jumping ability to get onto the roof of 210 Terry Street. Go through the window, equip the Wind Ring and then select the vase. This will get you the Odd Engraving. Take it, then go back to the suburbs. Before you leave this area, spend some time taking out the Smiles jogging up and down the street in yellow shirts. Each one you kill gets you an Almeyda Coin, which you will need later on.

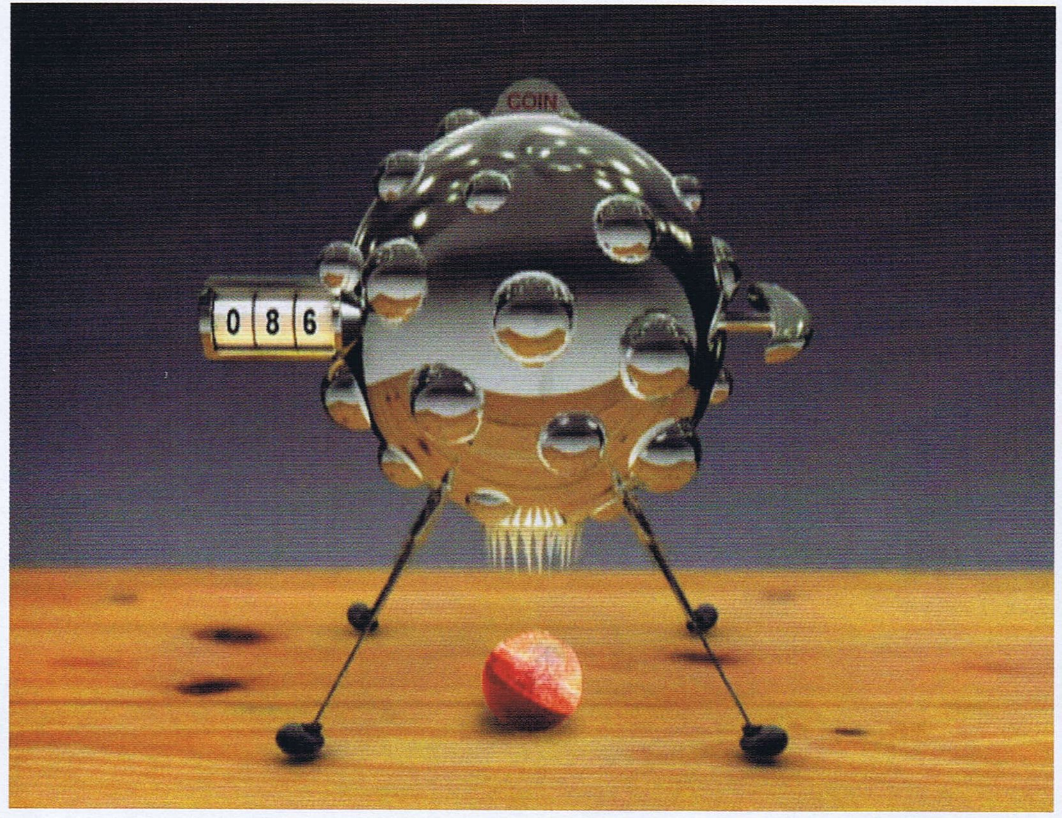
Leave the Suburbs the way you came in, turn left and head straight up the road. You'll find the game's most annoying enemies here in the shape of the Giant Smiles. There are two tactics you can use here. One is to use Mask De Smith to take them out or, alternatively, you can use a faster character to run up to the giants, prompting them to fall and kill themselves, before running away again – just beware of the explosion after they fall. Your destination here is the security gate at the far end of the road. You need to use your Odd Engraving and the











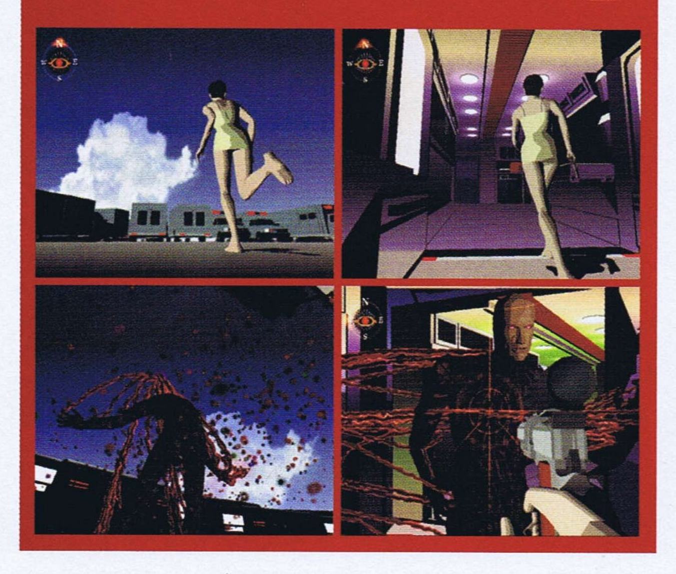






BOSS!

Again, nothing too difficult here. All you need to do is shoot Almeyda's afro. If you can't see it, you need to run around the ambulance interiors until you're behind him. Just one shot is all it takes. Easy.



HUSTLE password you got earlier from Travis's t-shirt to get through.

Up the road you'll find Harman's room (so make sure you save) and a diner a little further up. Enter the diner and use the capsule machine. Keep pumping in the Almayda Coins (you'll probably need around 20 at the most) until you have every capsule apart from numbers 7 and 12. Change personalities to Coyote, then check the photo on the wall and head out the back of the diner to find a path leading back to the suburbs. Use Coyote to pick the lock at the end of the path.

Once back in the suburbs, take a left and head over to 206 Terry St. Use Coyote's jumping ability to get onto the roof and enter the house. Now change to Kaede and use her special ability on the blood on the wall to reveal Almeyda Collection #12. Leave the room, turn right and change back to Coyote to pick another lock at the end of this path. To your left is the railroad, which is your next destination. But before you get there, it may be a good idea to save your game at Harman's nearby room.

Once on the other side of the railroad, make your way to the drugstore up ahead. Outside you'll hear the 'something interesting' guitar sample. Stop where you hear it and access the photo in your inventory. This will trigger a cutscene inside the drugstore, which will open up the warehouse. Inside you'll find Almeyda Collection #7. Once you've grabbed it, head over to Harman's room, use up your remaining serum and save.

Enter the post office on the other side of the street and follow the mountain path to its end. You will now be outside the First Life building. At the gate you have to answer questions about the posters you saw on the mountain path. The answers are as follows:

1: 3 people
2: 4
3: Purple
4: Bronco
5: Perfect City
6: 6th question
7: Suit

Push through the next section and carry on until you reach the boss.











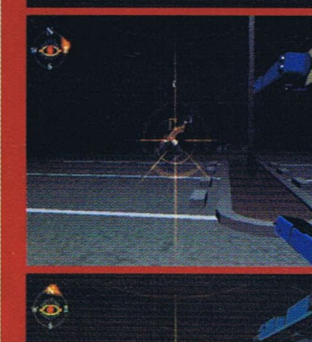


BOSS!

Ayame Blackburn can be a bit tricky – you can't shoot her until she's under the lights and she moves so quickly that it's difficult to connect with a carefully aimed shot – so it's probably best to go with Con for this battle as you can simply spray the place with bullets in the hope that you get lucky. There's no point running around after Ayame, so it's best to position yourself between two sets of lights and just camp there, waiting for her to pass. Depending on how much power you've upgraded, you'll need to hit her between six and eight times to emerge victorious.









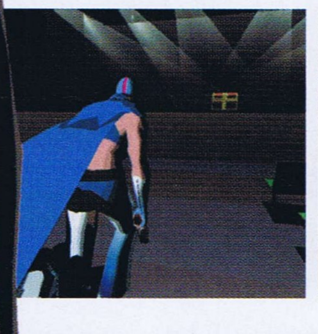
ENCOUNTER: AMUSEMENT PARK

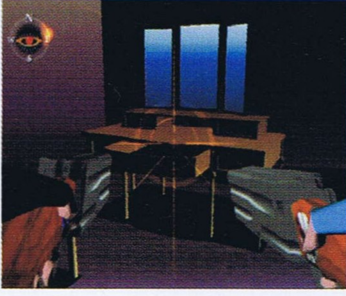
First up, save the game at Harman's room at the start of the level and change to Mask de Smith so you can take out the heavily armoured Protector Smiles. Keep moving through the opening section along the only path you can until you get to the area with the cinemas.

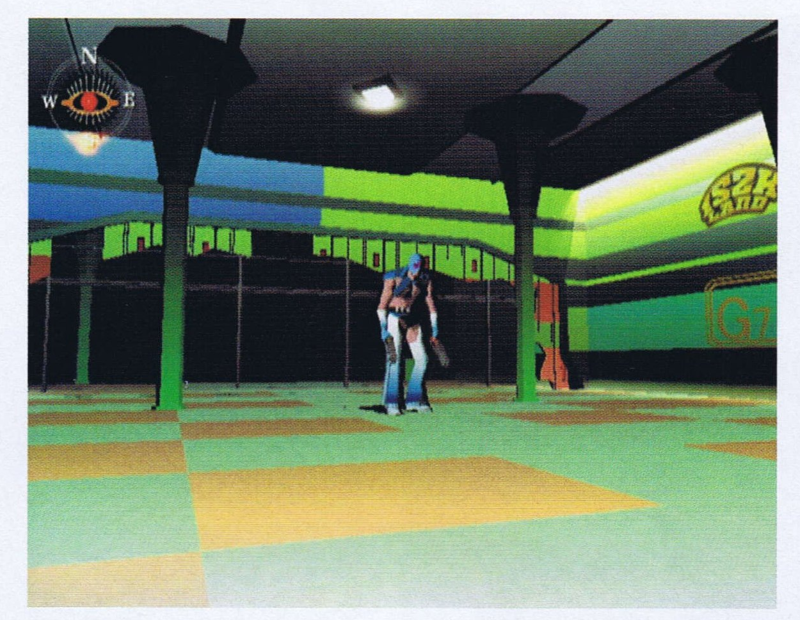
First, enter Cinema 1 and use Coyote to open the chest to retrieve the Time Ring. Next, head over to Cinema 4 and change back to Mask de Smith. Use him to shoot grenades at the cinema screen so you can get to the chest behind. Open it to change your costume to Texas Mask. Leave the cinema and head over to the far side of the street where the cinemas are. Here, you'll find a broken dressing table. Equip the Time Ring to restore it and take the odd engraving.

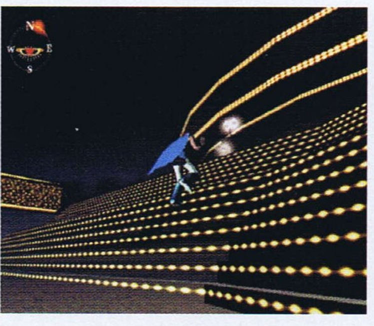
At the other end of this street, you'll find a mains breaker just around the corner. Use the odd engraving to turn the street lights back on. Head back around to the cinemas and you'll find some balloons stuck to a street lamp. Equip the Wind Ring to help bring them down to earth and then grab the first Soul Shell, which is attached to them.

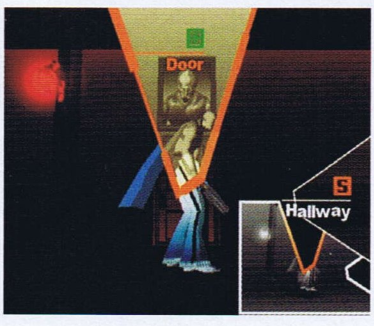
Now head back down the twisting, greeny-yellow hallway, away from the cinemas and use Mask to shoot the security door that blocked you off previously in the level. Head through and make your way to the Killered Mansion. In this next section you have a circular











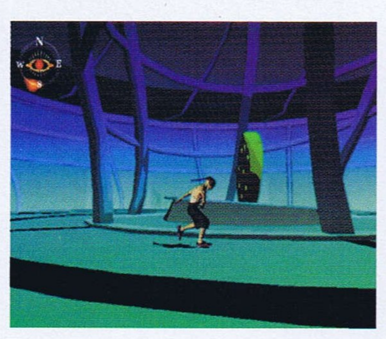
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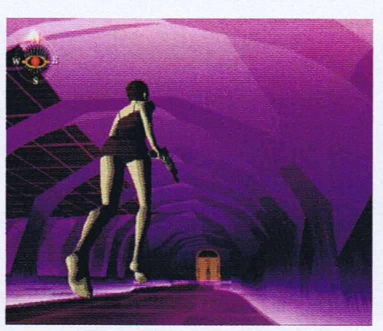
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Now head back down the twisting, greeny-yellow hallway, away from the cinemas and use Mask to shoot the security door that blocked you off previously in the level. Head through and make your way to the Killered Mansion. In this next section you have a circular hallway with doors on the left-hand wall. To progress, you need to go through the doors where the Smiles are facing forward. Eventually you'll emerge in a new area. At the beginning of this section you will hear the 'something interesting' music once again. Stop where you are, change personalities to Coyote and use his special ability to jump up for a conversation with Travis, which earns you your second Soul Shell.

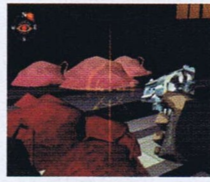
Now continue forward to the Adventure Plaza. There's one of Harman's rooms on the way, so make sure you change back to Mask de Smith while



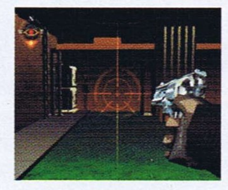


ENCOUNTER: BLACKBURN RESIDENCE





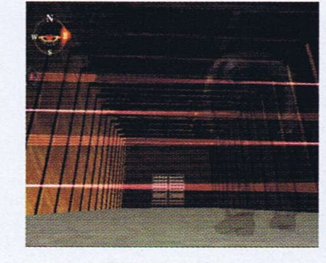


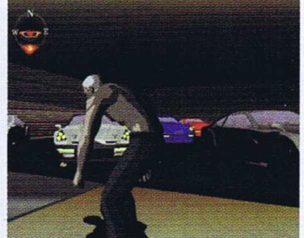


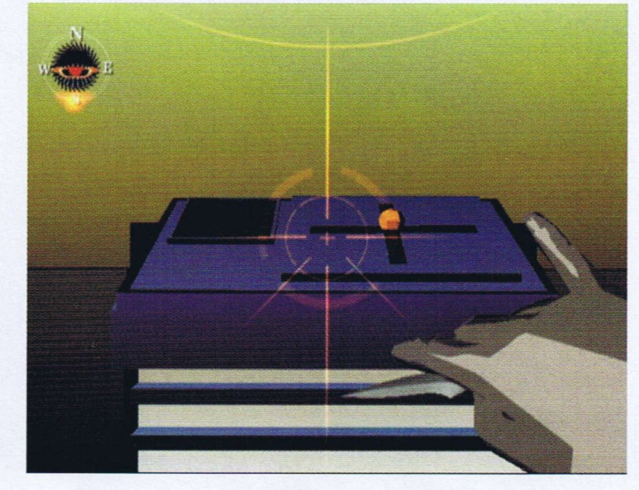
Enter the Blackburn Residence, head through the garden and around the side of the house to the left. Keep going until you reach a yard with a statue. Change character to Dan, charge your shot to its maximum and shoot the statue's heart to get your first Soul Shell. Now head back around to the other side of the house. Here you'll find a little corridor blocked off by security beams. Change to Kevin and use his invisibility power to get through. You will now be in the garage.

Follow the hallway past the cars until you reach a control panel at the end. You need to arrange the cars to how they look in the picture to your right – with one space on the far right, centre row. This will make room for another car to enter the garage – underneath which is another head holding a Power Ring. Go back the way you came and enter the house through the front door. Take a right and follow the path around until you reach a fireplace. Equip either the Wind Ring or the Water Ring, use them to extinguish the flames, and you can now pick up the second Soul Shell.

To the left of the fireplace is a cracked wall. You need to destroy this using Mask de Smith's grenade launchers. Head outside and change characters to Kevin again, using his invisibility skill to get past the security beams (and the enemies on the path, if you want). Climb up the steps to the door at the far side and enter the second house.







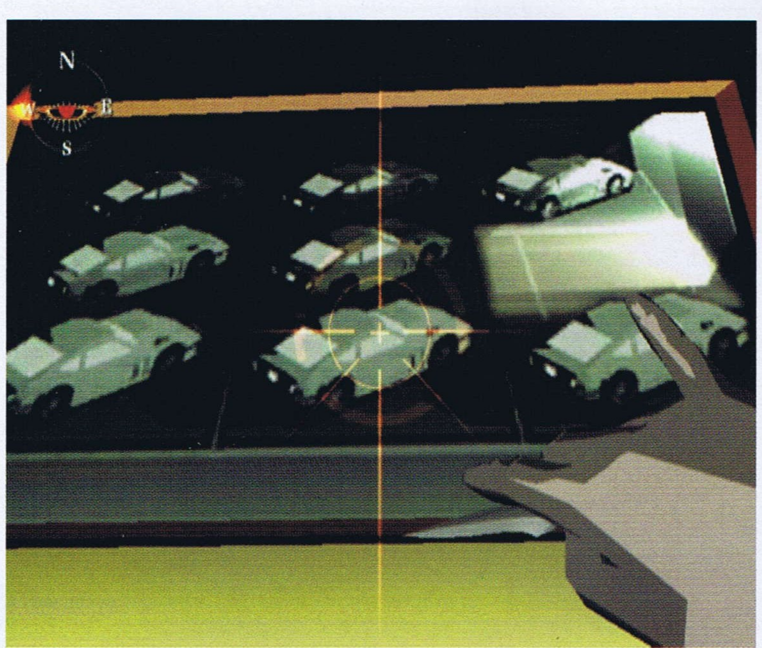
When you enter the house, take the path to your left and find the room with the clock at the end of the hallway. Equip the Time Ring and select the clock for the third Soul Shell. Go back the way you came, past the front door and along the path to the right. In one of the rooms on your right, you'll find a security panel. Select it and turn it off. Go into the next bedroom, change characters to Con and use him to get under the child's entrance. You now need to talk to Ulmeyda's ghost and shoot the Yellow Smile who is blocking the odd engraving.

Head back to the front door and take the path directly opposite it (into the screen). Save at Harman's room and use any available Serum to upgrade Con's power. Change to Con and make your way through the door at the end of the hall for another fight against Ayame Blackburn.

Again, you can only shoot her when she's standing in the light. The best tactic here is simply to hold your ground. Aim at her when she appears and pump her full of bullets. If you keep hitting her, she'll find it difficult to attack back. If she does, hopefully you will have collected enough vials by now to soak up any damage. Keep blasting and reloading when the shutters close and you'll see her off in no time. Once she's dead, turn off the security panel in the room and then go all the way back to the Garage.

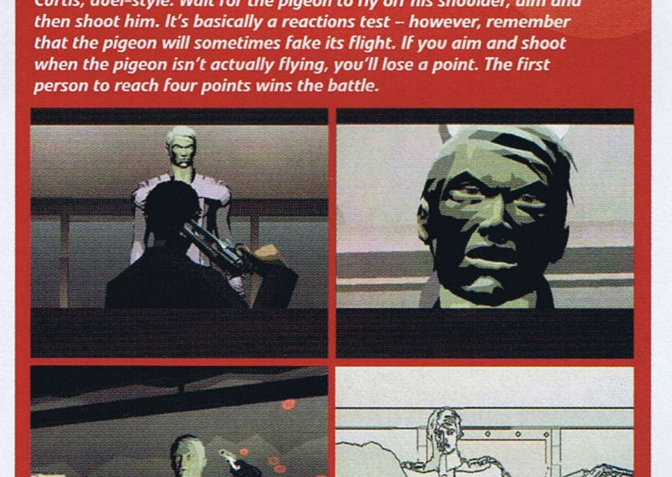
Just outside the Garage is a water tank. Use the Fire Ring to burn off the weird smelling liquid and pick up the Odd Engraving that gets revealed. Now go all the way back to the pool and use both Odd Engravings on the valve at the side. This will drain out the pool, revealing a cracked wall which you can blast open with Mask de Smith's grenades. Save at Harman's room and head through the door at the bottom of the pool.

Go through the Vinculum Gate and through the other side to face off against the Laser Smile. It's probably best to use Kaede for this, as her scope comes in handy for quickly pinpointing the weak-point, which is essential really, as one shot will kill you outright. Once he's down, head through the door on the other side for the final confrontation.

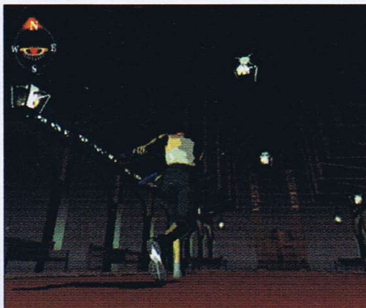


BOSS!

This boss fight is pretty clever. As Dan, you have to face off against Curtis, duel-style. Wait for the pigeon to fly off his shoulder, aim and then shoot him. It's basically a reactions test – however, remember that the pigeon will sometimes fake its flight. If you aim and shoot when the pigeon isn't actually flying, you'll lose a point. The first person to reach four points wins the battle.







ALTER EGO

Head through the gate to trigger the cutscene with the musician. Once it's over, go and talk to Iwazaru for your first of many colour samples. Now change to Mask de Smith and use him to move the barrels at the end of the alleyway on your left. Talk to Iwazaru for another colour sample and then save your game at Harman's room.

Now head for the blue door and on the other side, talk to Iwazaru to get another colour sample. Now change characters to Con. Con has the ability to see sounds – something which manifests itself with orange, circular sonar-type rings from junctions along the path. You need to follow these sounds to get out of this section. Once you're out of this area, talk to Iwazaru to get another colour sample, and then go to Harman's room to trigger the checkpoint.

Next, head through the red door at the far end of this area and make your way to the Church Entrance. Head inside, deal with the Smile ambush and talk to Iwazaru by the stained glass window to get another colour sample. Head upstairs to see Iwazaru for another colour sample, then head back downstairs and follow the path until you reach a lamp. Light this using the Fire Ring and it will open the pathway ahead. Change personalities to Dan and go through the entrance.

You will now be in a large hall with a massive Smile nest. Use Dan's charged shots to get rid of the yellow weak spots before using a triple charge on the nest's central red weak spot. Once it's dead, another door will reveal itself at the end of the hall. Go through and take a left at the junction in the next room towards the Grand Staircase.

Next, take the alleyway to the left. At the end, you will find a room with a painting of Iwazaru and a cracked wall. Use Mask de Smith to blow up the wall and head inside to get another colour sample. Head back out of the room, towards the grand staircase. Take the first left and then the next right, up the stairs, towards a bunch of barrels. There's a pocket watch here. Use the Time Ring on it to get the Odd Engraving.

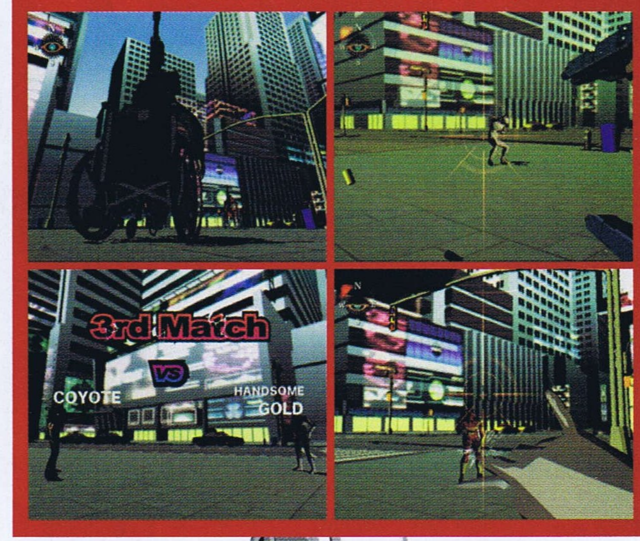
Carry on until you get to an open area with a bunch of windmills, here you'll find Iwazaru for yet another colour sample. Go around to the left and towards the Artist's Mansion. Instead of going to the entrance, head up to the Terrace, speak to Curtis and then use the Wind Ring on the Windmill. This will open up the mansion for you, so head inside.

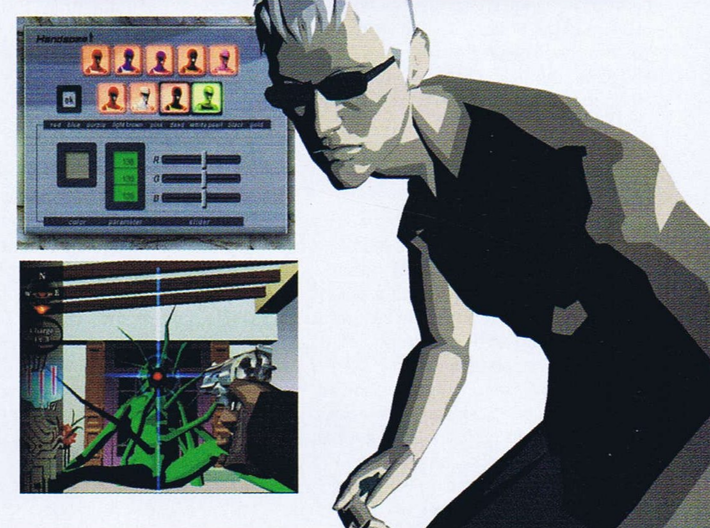
There are just a few more enemies to dispatch, along with another Smile Nest Take it out with Dan's three-charge to the weak spot. All done? On to the boss…

BOSS!

Now this is weird. You have to face off against the Seven Handsome Men in Times Square, with each personality taking out each member of the comic book team. The tactics are as follows.

Harman vs Red: Simply shoot your opponent first.
Con vs White: Shoot 30 bullets at the enemy.
Coyote vs Gold: Shoot any of the enemy's limbs.
Kaede vs Brown: Be the first to reload.
Kevin vs Dead: Hit with 12 shots.
Dan vs Blue: Shoot the head.
Mask vs Purple: Shoot off a few bullets, wait for the transformation and then let off a five-charge shot.
Garcia vs Pink: Nothing! A cutscene will kick in automatically.





BOSS!

If this boss touches you, you'll die – so you have to be quick. Using Kaede's scope, pick off the smaller red spots on the Smile's body (because as he gets closer, it gets harder to clear his body of spots) and then take out the larger ones. The easiest to hit is the one in the centre of his body, so save that till last, as he will rush you when he's down to his last spot.





SMILE: HOTEL

For this level, you have to find each Soul Shell on each floor before taking out the boss on the top floor.

GROUND FLOOR
Use Kaede's special ability behind the reception desk for the Soul Shell.

2nd FLOOR
Change to Dan and destroy the Smile's nest by taking out the yellow spots first and then the red. You will find the Soul Shell in Room 203, behind the nest.

3rd FLOOR
Head for Room 306 and shoot the cord on the hairdryer to get the Soul Shell in the bath.

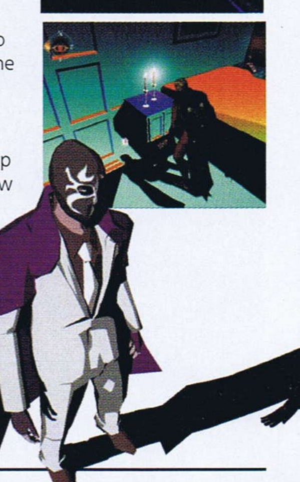
4th Floor.
Change to Mask, go to Room 404 and use his grenade launcher to break open the closet for the Soul Shell.

5th FLOOR
Find Room 502, then go into the bedroom and use the Fire Ring on the candles that you find there. This will reveal the Soul Shell.

6th FLOOR
Change to Coyote, head left out of the elevator, pick the lock on the door and talk to Travis. He will reveal the Soul Shell.

7th FLOOR
Change to Kaede, equip the Wind Ring and blow the flowers off the floor to reveal the last Soul Shell. Save in Harman's room and head into the Suite for this level's boss encounter.





SMILE: SCHOOL

First up, head up the stairs to the Data Room. Enter 3576 into the control panel and talk to Travis, who will give you the cassette player. Head out of the Data Room and around the corner to the drinking fountain to get your first tape.

Go back to the ground floor and through the corridor to get to the ladies' room. Flush the toilet to get the second tape. Continue along the corridor and enter the next classroom you come across to get another tape. Go along the corridor and into another classroom for another tape. Go straight across the junction and get two more tapes from the two classrooms down this hall. Go back to the junction and turn right. There's another tape in the classroom to the right here. Go around the corner and stop in between the rows of lockers.

First shoot locker 656 and talk to Travis. Now shoot locker 666 and grab the Soul Shell and tape. Keep shooting the locker doors that keep opening and eventually a set of double doors will unlock for you. Continue up the hall to the classroom on the left. Take the tape and exit to save at Harman's room.

Go through the unlocked double doors and head upstairs to the second floor. Enter the cafeteria and change your personality to Dan, so that you can take out the Smile's nest with ease. If you don't have 20 healing vials, it might be a good idea to stock up at this point.

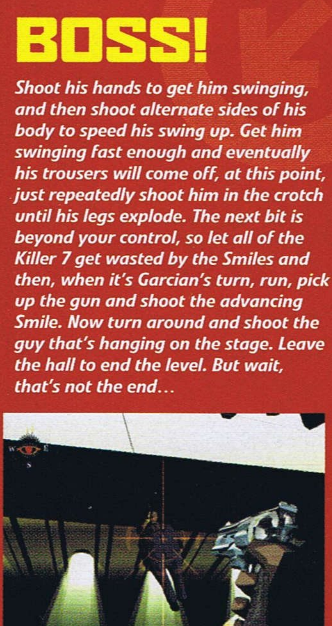
Continue through the library, through the Viculum Gate until you reach the Galactic Tomahawk Smile. Just keep pumping him full of bullets, remembering to pick off the missiles as they come towards you. As long as you're using Dan and have plenty of healing blood, this won't pose much of a problem. Once it's dead, pick up the last tape and make your way to the Principal's Office.

Shoot the left-most trophy in the cabinet to open up the secret door, but before you got though, make your way the Chairman's Room and go to the Operation Panel. Enter the codes 55549 and 72712 to gain access to the safe. Turn the knob on the safe all the way to the right and then all the way to the left and take the Odd Engraving. Head back through the secret tunnel and make your way back to the Data Room, which is at the start of the level.

Go to the terminal and input the following answers:

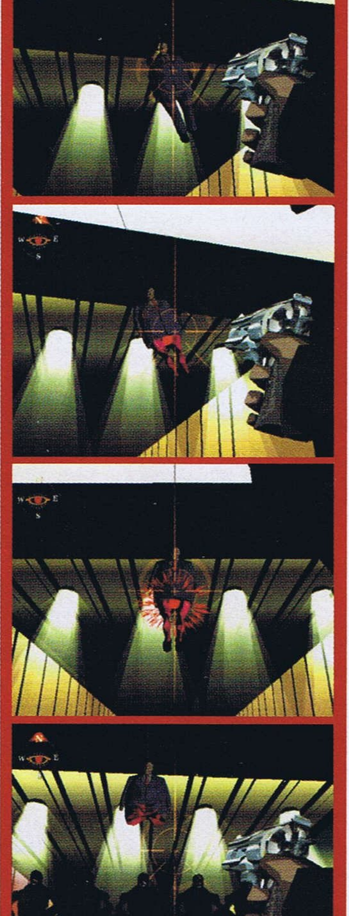
1: PARKREINER
2: 00480158
3: ALABAMA
4: 11221942
5: B
6: MICHAEL
7: KATHARINE
8: 04281952
9: EAGLE

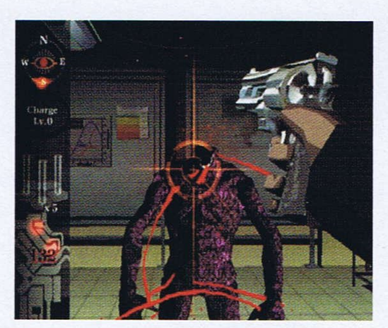
Now save at Harman's nearby room and head out to the Gymnasium to face the final boss of the game…

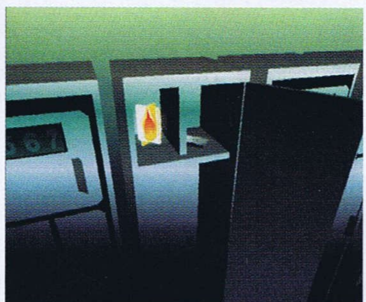


BOSS!

Shoot his hands to get him swinging, and then shoot alternate sides of his body to speed his swing up. Get him swinging fast enough and eventually his trousers will come off, at this point, just repeatedly shoot him in the crotch until his legs explode. The next bit is beyond your control, so let all of the Killer 7 get wasted by the Smiles and then, when it's Garcian's turn, run, pick up the gun and shoot the advancing Smile. Now turn around and shoot the guy that's hanging on the stage. Leave the hall to end the level. But wait, that's not the end…





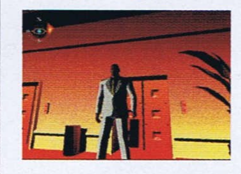






THE END?

Now, obviously we're not going to give the ending away, but just so you know, your objective for your return visit to the hotel is to seek out the bloodstains in each room of the hotel (they're in the same locations as the Soul Shells from your previous visit) before making your way to the top of the building for possibly one of the coolest endings ever…



LION

The next section is very short and there's only one way you can go. The Smiles here are also invisible and can't be scanned, so you'll have to pick them off slowly and carefully. Once you have reached the end, you'll be given a choice – this will determine the final outcome.



THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



DONKEY KONGA 2

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 2
Get one of each badge.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 3
Buy all the Gorilla arrangements.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 4
Get a gold award on every Gorilla Duet track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 5
Get a gold award on every Solo Gorilla track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 6
Complete the full set in Challenge mode.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 7
Get a gold award for every Chimp Duet track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 8
Get a gold award for every Solo Chimp track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 9
Complete the 12-song set in Challenge mode.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 10
Get a gold award for every Monkey Duet track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 11
Get a gold award for every Solo Monkey track.

UNLOCK DIXIE'S NOTES 12
Complete the 6-song set in Challenge mode.

UNLOCK ECHO FEATURE IN FREESTYLE ZONE
Complete at least 325 songs (also unlocks Dixie's notes 76).

UNLOCK NA NA HEY HEY KISS HIM GOODBYE IN FREESTYLE ZONE
Complete the full set in Challenge mode.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

ADA WONG
Score at least 4000 points or hit all of the targets on Game Type A.

ASHLEY GRAHAM
Score at least 3000 on Game Type A.

BELLA SISTERS
Score at least 4000 points or hit all of the targets on Game Type B.

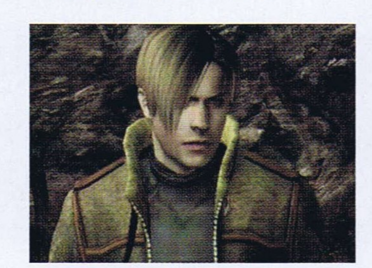
DON DIEGO
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type B.

DON ESTEBAN
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type B.

DON JOSE
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type B.

DON MANUEL
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type B.

DON PEDRO
Score at least 4000 points or hit all of the targets on Game Type C.





DR. SALVADOR
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type B.

LEADER ZEALOT
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type C.

LEON WITH HANDGUN
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type A.

LEON WITH ROCKET LAUNCHER
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type A.

LEON WITH SHOTGUN
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type A.

LUIS SERA
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type A.

MERCHANT
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type C.

ZEALOT WITH BOWGUN
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type C.

ZEALOT WITH SCYTHE
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type C.

ZEALOT WITH SHIELD
Score at least 3000 points on Game Type C.



MEDAL OF HONOR EUROPEAN ASSAULT

ACTIVATE CHEAT MODE
Pause, then hold L + R, then press Up, Y, Y, B, Up, A. Then enter one of the following codes.

COMMIT SUICIDE
L, Z, R, Up, A, Z.

HIDE GAME INFO
A, Y, Right, A, Z, B.

KILL NEMESIS
L, Y, L, Z, L, Z.

GET OSS DOCUMENT
Left, Y, B, B, Down, B.

DISABLE SHELLSHOCK
Z, R, X, Y, Y, L.







READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a mystery prize from Geraint's 'special drawer'. Chances are, it'll be a game.



1. RESIDENT EVIL 4

Dragon Pilots

In the castle where the dragon statues attack, you don't have to take out the statues' pilots. Wait for them to stop (making sure that you're well out of their range) then shoot one of the gold hooks around halfway down the suspending chains and the statue will drop into the lava below. Easy.
James Moreton, Liverpool

2. PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN

Secret Ending
If you collect all 10 life upgrades, you will unlock a secret ending. You will get the Water Sword, but you have to fight the Dahaka to complete the game.
Charlie Duboc, Folkestone

3. HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE

Free Money
Get one Ruby Spice from Ruby and make a salad from it. You will get an extra one free! Repeat this to get an unlimited amount, which you can sell to Van for 100G each. Also, get the seedmaker and plant a fruit tree. Instead of selling your fruit, put it in the seedmaker – you will get two seeds per piece of fruit. You can sell these to Van or plant more trees and sell the seeds for anything up to 1,000,000G.
Conall McAteer, Dublin

4. RESIDENT EVIL 4

Alternative Music
When the credits for Assignment Ada have finished you will be asked if you want to see them again. Click yes and the credits will roll with alternative music.
Geoff Alsterly, Birmingham

5. VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

Want some V-Points?
When there's a puzzle where you have to hit three blocks with Silvia's Replay power, instead just shoot them with her guns. V-points will pop out. These will keep coming.
Darren Hayesly, Hounslow

6. METROID PRIME

Kill Ridley
When Ridley changes into his second form, use the Wave Buster. If you use enough missiles, he will die in one hit.
Alexander Daniels, Hitchin

7. PIKMIN 2

Fun with bees
If you go to the Wistful Wilderness on days that end in one or zero (50 and 51, for example), you will see some bees. These drop loads of goodies for you.
Jane Sandringham, Beeston

8. SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

Attack of the Turnips
When Princess Peach uses her turnip attack, she will sometimes pull out a bonus item. Occasionally this will be a more powerful turnip.
Julie Halliday, Newark

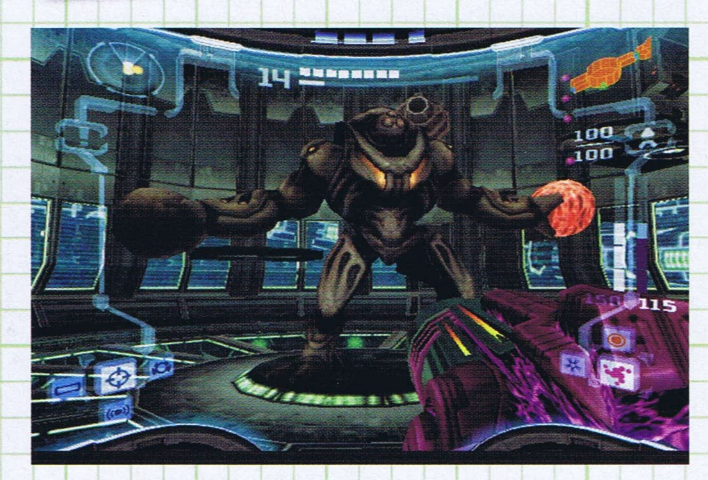
9. LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING

Gandalf strikes
There's a glitch in the game. Set your ranged attacks to 10, then charge up a devastating attack before a cutscene. When it finishes, you can do a devastating attack without charging one up.
Stephen Tully, Yeovil

10. IKARUGA

See how it's done
If you change your monitor type setting before going into Demo mode, you will see the tactics you need to complete a level.
Dave Stevens, Bedford





Dr Kitts: solving your gaming problems since 1872.

Dr Kitts,
I recently picked up a second hand copy of *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*. I've been loving it so far, but I'm completely stuck on the Boost Guardian. Try as I might, I just can't defeat him. How can I destroy the irksome git?
Dave Browlowe, Northampton

Dr Kitts considers his options, looks at the assembled police task force, then puts his foot on the accelerator and plunges into the Grand Canyon.
This one is a bit of a toughie, so it's no wonder that you're stuck here. The way to defeat the Boost Guardian is to pummel him with your most powerful weapons (like the light beams or your super missiles) when he's in his solid Ing form. Unfortunately, you can't damage him when he's in any of his other forms. When you've done some damage, he'll change into his second form. When he does this, he will boost around the arena, which will seriously hurt you if you're unlucky enough to get hit. As he can't be damaged, your best tactic is to use Morph Ball mode (which will make avoiding it a lot easier.)

You need to lure him towards the four pylons in the centre of the arena. When he hits them, he will transform into a liquid form and proceed to chase you. Avoid him as best you can – this form deals you the most damage. You still can't damage him in this form, but your shots will affect him. So the best tactic is to run around, laying bombs behind you. He stays in these two forms until you have hit him enough, then he will revert back to his solid form and you can deal him some damage. Repeat this process until he is no more.

Dr Kitts,
I'm currently playing through *Resident Evil 4* and I'm stuck on Chapter 2-2, where you have to defend a shack against the villagers with Luis. The sheer numbers of the villagers is totally overwhelming!
David Joyce, Burton-on-Trent

Dr Kitts reloads his shotgun, which he likes to keep handy, for close encounters.
This part of the game is incredibly tough. Firstly, use the shotgun as your main weapon. Block all the windows with the furniture available. Make sure all your weapons are reloaded and pick up the herbs and shells that are in the shack. Keep firing at head height and if the opportunity to use a kick presents itself, use it. When you go upstairs, knock the ladders down – this is absolutely vital. You then need to concentrate your fire on the staircase. Grenades will come in particularly handy here. After a while, a cutscene will start.



Got an Action Replay?
Whack these codes into it…



MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

Master Codes
1RQ0-18NU-B5PA8
Y8C1-743X-AG1WN
KTZ1-1GPB-9V3PN
FRRH-RYJA-Q83PX
2N7W-A10J-BP8UN

Infinite Revives
KH5Z-YJ2V-Q9CE3
22VT-3GGX-649RX
0X49-4WED-7VDEM
0WFE-Z4TB-8DK98

Infinite Medkits
ZQ14-673E-XZHU8
22VT-3GGX-649RX
HK4B-60VR-NCB7M
GYKP-5GRH-QXD9P

Infinite Ammo
RWEW-TCGN-K9MVW
FRRH-RYJA-Q83PX
1H0J-A781-8WVAH

BATMAN BEGINS



Master Codes
XVM4-ECQE-FPD0T
806G-YF2P-7ADJ6

Infinite Health
MMT4-YJDB-5RT2M
HRQW-ZYC4-UAR53

Big Batman
FE9Q-CC65-YD5HX
8RTX-8DFP-JQZN2
GTVT-BBTQ-NP8TX
B6UZ-KDZP-N8P4T
K5TQ-28XV-ZTCZN

Max Reputation
NTQQ-P0KT-QBVBB
WCWF-C1PG-5PQ0V

Super Unlock
Unlock something in the game to activate this code.
QMF1-DJVY-0GE21
N7YX-NCW4-3ZQMV

Unlock all Movie Clips
MGWA-3FAZ-XE3RR
ZVB9-XD1U-QG2XN

DONKEY KONGA 2





Master Codes
D6R8-M3R8-Q1KMN
7FJP-WHC1-VK3U9

Loads of Cash
8BX2-R9DP-QD8D6
CBYX-Z2XV-VGXTE

Get 10 Coins per Note
TC38-NGRQ-Q8U2W
YVGK-P6YT-5TQD6

Dont Lose Score on Misses
V2J7-Q3CG-60N63
FBCF-RNHJ-D7AUP

Play Minigames for Free
6FH6-9QFD-CHJ8C
HGHD-A3EU-63223



YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE…

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a game. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net…

HERE'S MY TOP TIP…

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ......

Address ......

Postcode ......

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy or scribble your entry on a piece of paper and then send it to us. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi. You know, to help focus your mind.



Take your gaming to the next level...



wo new challenges this month, so we've finally filled up the list. So get cracking on *DK 2* and *Star Fox Assault*.

HOW IT WORKS: We've conjured up 20 tricky challenges, and you can tackle any or all of them that you like. If you complete three, you'll gain a place in the Bronze league; complete seven, and you'll be honoured with a place in the Silver league. Ten challenges completed means that you'll be entered into the Gold league, and a mighty 14 proves that you're the best of the best and are worthy of entry to the Platinum league. You'll get a certificate for each league that you place in, and if you somehow manage to beat all 20 challenges you'll get a special Skill Club Guru award and certificate, plus something nice that we've got lying around. So what are you waiting for?

THE RULES

- **Three completed challenges earn a Bronze placing; seven a Silver, 10 a Gold and 14 a Platinum.**
- **You can enter any challenges you like.**
- **Each challenge must be accompanied by either the photographic or videotaped proof that is requested.**
- **Use of cheat codes, Action Replays and the like is strictly prohibited – cheaters will be subjected to ritual humiliation for all to see.**
- **You are are allowed to submit extra challenges at a later date to increase your standing – you don't have to do them all at once.**
- **There are only 18 challenges here – we'll be adding two more over the coming months to take advantage of games such as *Killer 7* and *Geist*.**
- **If you want your proof back, please include a stamped, addressed envelope.**

● **NGC** would like to offer a thousand thanks to the following members of the Games Radar forums for their contributions to Skill Club 2005: Pell, Rex_McGee, TS2Master, tnman, LewisVoigtlanderFord, Andrew Mills, Drumstick, Plasticcoated, Thanatos, Vyper, Lenty, sntaa, Adam Pollard, and Falcon. Cheers!

NGC SKILL CLUB ENTRY FORM

Hello there, completed enough challenges to earn a certificate? Tick them off here and send your completed form and video/photo proof to:
Skill Club 2005,
NGC Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

	A *F-Zero GX*		H *1080° Snowboarding*		O *Eternal Darkness*
	B *Super Smash Bros. Melee*		I *Donkey Konga*		P *DK: Jungle Beat*
	C *Pikmin 2*		J *Rogue Squadron 2 Rogue Leader*		Q *Resident Evil 4*
	D *Soul Calibur 2*		K *Tales of Symphonia*		R *Timesplitters Future Perfect*
	E *Metroid Prime 2 Echoes*		L *Freedom Fighters*		S *Donkey Konga 2*
	F *Resident Evil*		M *The Legend of Zelda The Wind Waker*		T *Starfox Assault*
	G *Spider-Man 2*		N *Timesplitters 2*		

Use a photocopy of this form or copy it down onto a piece of paper if you'd rather not cut your copy of **NGC** Magazine.

Please send my certificate to:

NAME: ....

ADDRESS: ....

....

....

....

SKILL CLUB 2005 THE LEADER BOARD

Do you think you've got what it takes to get on the board? Then get playing.



PLATINUM: JAMIE HOBBS, KINGS LYNN
F-Zero GX, Super Smash Bros. Melee, Pikmin 2, Soul Calibur 2, Metroid Prime 2: Echoes, Resident Evil, 1080° Snowboarding, Donkey Konga, Tales of Symphonia, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Timesplitters 2, Eternal Darkness, Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat, Resident Evil 4.



SILVER: MATTHEW PELLETT, DURHAM
Super Smash Bros. Melee, Soul Calibur 2, Metroid Prime 2: Echoes, Spider-Man 2, Donkey Konga, Freedom Fighters, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Eternal Darkness.



SILVER: PHILIP MCNAIR, PORTUGAL
Super Smash Bros. Melee, Soul Calibur 2, Metroid Prime 2: Echoes, Donkey Konga, The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Timesplitters 2, Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat.



BRONZE: ANTHONY RYAN, MULLINGER
Spider-Man 2, Rogue Squadron 2: Rogue Leader, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Eternal Darkness, Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat.



BRONZE: STEPHEN LANER, STOKE
Soul Calibur 2, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Eternal Darkness.



BRONZE: MARK STEVENS, WEXFORD
Soul Calibur 2, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Eternal Darkness.



BRONZE: KRISTIAN ROANIEWICZ
The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Resident Evil, Eternal Darkness.



BRONZE: JONATHAN HUGHES, CHESTER
Resident Evil, Tales of Symphonia, Resident Evil 4.



BRONZE: CHRIS RICHARDS, PONTYPRIDD
Spider-Man 2, Pikmin 2, Resident Evil 4.



BRONZE: SHANKER VARMA, SLOUGH
Rogue Squadron 2: Rogue Leader, The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker, Soul Calibur.

Challenge A — *F-Zero GX*

What You Must Do: Beat all the staff ghosts.
Proof: A photo or video of your times.



Challenge B — *Super Smash Bros. Melee*

What You Must Do: Get a total time of under 3 minutes 50 seconds for 100-man melee.
Proof: A photo of the screen showing the total time spent.



Challenge C — *Pikmin 2*



What You Must Do: Complete the game in a mere 10 days with all 201 pieces of treasure found. There's literally no room for error here.
Proof: A photo of the stats screen showing how much treasure you've collected.

Challenge D — *Soul Calibur 2*



What You Must Do: With Mitsurugi and the Damascus Sword (which can't block attacks), complete 15 battles on Standard Extra Survival mode. Oh yes.
Proof: A video of your performance.

Challenge E — *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*

What You Must Do: Complete it with 22% items – no missiles, energy, dark/light beam expansions, bombs or beam special weapons.
Proof: A photo of the ending stats screen with 22% items clearly visible.



Challenge F — *Resident Evil*



What You Must Do: Complete the game in under two hours with Jill. A nice speed run that keeps it tight, but certainly not impossible as it just requires a reasonably efficient route.
Proof: A photo of your time.



Challenge G — *Spider-Man 2*



What You Must Do: Find every single token. Secret, Hideout, Skyscraper… all of them!
Proof: Photos or video of the relevant stats.

Challenge H — *1080° Snowboarding*

What You Must Do: Beat 1'22"00 on Ride Easy Railways – Trestle Trouble, the toughest track in the game. Any character/board combo can be used except for the Rocket Board.
Proof: A photo of your time.



Challenge I — *Donkey Konga*



What You Must Do: Combo the entire song Don't Stop Me Now on Gorilla mode. Yipes! Great and OK notes are allowed, but you can't lose your combo from the first note.
Proof: A photo of the end-of-song screen.

Challenge J — *Rogue Squadron 2 Rogue Leader*



What You Must Do: Get Gold medals on all levels, including the secret levels.
Proof: Photos or video of every medal.



Challenge K — *Tales of Symphonia*

What You Must do: Rack up an 85+ combo. Unison Attacks are key here.
Proof: A photo of the post-battle statistics screen – which you get after you emerge victorious from a fight.



Challenge L — *Freedom Fighters*

What You Must Do: On Freedom Fighters mode, complete the last level (Fort Jay) without using a single recruit.
Proof: A video of the hoisted flag, skipping the credits and showing Normal difficulty complete.



Challenge M — *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*



What You Must Do: Beat Ganondorf with only three hearts. That means you can only have collected three hearts in the entire game – no more than that!
Proof: A video of your performance.



Challenge N — *Timesplitters 2*

What You Must Do: Get 56 Arcade awards.
Proof: A video of you scrolling down the list of 56 Arcade awards.

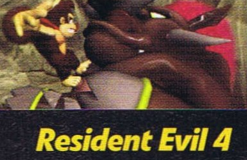
Challenge O — *Eternal Darkness*

What you Must Do: Complete the game three times, once with each artifact.
Proof: A photo showing that Eternal mode is available to select.

Challenge P — *Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat*

What You Must Do: Get a Platinum medal for every single level.
Proof: A short video, scrolling through the level select screen, showing the awards.





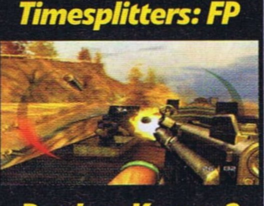
Challenge Q — *Resident Evil 4*

What You Must Do: Complete the game with a 90% hit ratio.
Proof: A photo of the end of game statistics. You are not allowed to use a cleared game file for this challenge.



Challenge R — *Timesplitters: FP*

What You Must Do: Complete the whole game on Story mode in a total time of under 1 hour 55 minutes – good luck.
Proof: A short video of your times from the statistics screen in player progress.



Challenge S — *Donkey Konga 2*

What You Must Do: Play the William Tell Overture without missing a beat.
Proof: A photo of the end-of-song screen.

Challenge T — *Star Fox Assault*

What You Must Do: Capture every single special flag hidden in Story mode.
Proof: Some photos of the end-of-level stats screens showing that you've collected the flags.



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ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your name and address so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

STAR LETTER

If you send us the best letter of the month, you'll receive a shiny new Gamecube (or GBA/DS) game from our bulging sack of shiny new games. Lovely.

"The only ones"

They've done it again – they've come up with a good idea and now they've got to prove everyone wrong (see also DS, Celda, N64 controllers, the viability of the kids market etc). While Sony and Microsoft are busy waving their polygon counts and processor speeds at each other, I would like to applaud Nintendo for being the only ones with a fresh set of ideas.

Creating a console that sacrifices raw power in favour of development ease, allowing for innovation in how the game is actually played and experienced beyond the finite realms of graphical and audio technicalities, means that fresh new games and genres can be created by smaller developers with talent and ideas, who haven't simply got more money than sense. So Revolution might not be as powerful as the others – who cares? As Sony and Xbox fans started crying salty tears of joy over the E3 tech demos, you could practically hear the game developers screaming in fear, while smaller publishers prepared to declare bankruptcy, and then suicide.

Sure, the technical quality of the demos was amazing, but how much is it actually going to cost to create an entire 20-hour game with those kind of graphics? The only way such a project would be worth the risk would be if you only made guaranteed sellers – shooters, racers, shooters, beat-'em-ups and a remake of *FF7*, judging by the demos. Maybe when they're paying £50-60 for yet another pro-American war game, your average consumer may start to think twice.

Arthur Plant, Thornhill

***And that's Nintendo's revolution. The games industry often compares itself to the movie business, and the analogy has never been more apt. Hollywood churns out huge, expensive sequels that sell solely on the marketability of their stars. Perhaps Nintendo will become an arthouse cinema, located down a far more interesting street than that big, soulless multiplex. It all depends on whether customers are clued-up enough to go out of their way to catch a one-night-only gem like Avalon, or if they'd prefer to buy a £6 tray of soggy nachos and watch Star Wars on a choice of 20 screens.* Ed**



"My mum"

Watching the E3 press conferences, one extraordinary thing struck me: when did the games industry get so incredibly violent? I know I sound like my mum here, but games have such huge potential to be a truly vibrant art form and take us to wonderful places. Despite this, I would say 80% of all the games at E3 were violence-orientated. It seems like a wasted opportunity. Maybe I want one good shooter in my collection, but that's it, for the most part I don't want to play another generic gun game. I wish developers would be prepared to leave the conventional genres and invent new types of game more often.

David Yarrow, via email

***The remaining 20% of games at E3 were based on cars. Hopefully Nintendo's plan to welcome independent developers to Revolution will result in more original ideas finding their way to the wider market.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

Do you know why the DS has been launched using so many weird sexual references ('touching is good', 'Third Leg' etc)?
Rory Glynn, via email
***Erm, actually it's third pillar, not leg.* Ed**

He's making a list,
And checking it twice,
Of name's he's taken
and asses he's iced,
The Reggie-lution's
coming to town.
Andrew Lea, Blackpool
He knows when you are sleeping,
He knows when you're awake,
He knows the status of your ass,
***And the bones he's gonna break.* Ed**

Am I a criminal now that I downloaded a free GBA Game? I am not a crook!
Chris O'Neill, Ireland
***Yes, you are.* Ed**

Where is Enjiki? What has happened to the best mascot you've ever had for your magazine?
Andrew Baranyai, Harrogate
***Make up your minds, people!* Ed**

Nintendo, always a family company, would not let Square use any naughty words in their games. Now, Final Fantasy and all its sister games are directly associated with PlayStation.
Joe Lawrence, Grundisburgh
***What?* Ed**

"The solution"

I think I have the solution to Nintendo's little console war problem. Nintendo has the best back catalogue of games, there's no question about that. It has already been confirmed that Gamecube games will work on the Revolution, but do they still make any money from NES, SNES, GB, N64 and Virtual Boy games? No. So the answer would be to have a few hundred classic Nintendo ROMs built into the Revolution's memory. How could Sony or Microsoft compete with that?

Fresh out of the box, you could play SNES or N64 *Mario Kart* – what a perfect way to spend the weekend with a couple of mates. I heard rumours that the Revolution controller would be programmable, so that would be perfect for all the old consoles, or they could come up with something like an N64 controller with an analogue stick like the Gamecube's.

Nobody could be without Nintendo's new console. Everybody loves the classic Mario and Zelda games, so why not give them away to tempt new customers?

Mark Dodsworth, Nottingham

***Considering you wrote this several days before the machine was unveiled, you either work at Nintendo or you're Mystic Meg's boyfriend. I'd say the Revolution is likely to come pre-loaded with a few 'special' games, but I think you already know the answer to that one, too.* Ed**

"Masterly skill"

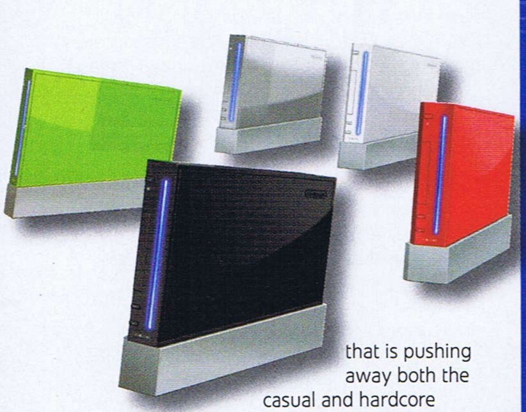
I have always admired Nintendo's ability to take a simple idea and execute it with masterly skill, but I'm worried that they're making a grave mistake with Revolution. Making games more simplistic? Too many buttons on a control pad? What? Surely this is a surefire way of turning players off? The reason people aren't playing so much any more isn't because they look at a control pad and vomit in terror, it's because they look at a game and realise they could be having more fun elsewhere. And as for casual gamers being attracted by simplicity, well that's just insulting rubbish. *GTA*, for example, thrives on casual gamers while still using lots of buttons and a fair degree of complexity.

What Nintendo have to do is listen to gamers and realise that it's not the complexity of the games but the simplicity of the content



HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to): Matt Farmer, via email; Sam Rose, Bingham; Shanker Varma, Slough; Anders Tai, Copenhagen; Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark; Ben Hooper, via email; Chris Lewis, Sevenoaks; Daniel Scott, Perth; Gilles Reuse, Belgium; Alex White, via email; Toni Väisänen, Finland; David Bell, via email; Mark McGrath, Glasgow; Michael Foster, Fareham; James Kelly, Ireland; Ian Wallbridge, Sheffield; Daniel Bradnam, Leeming; Matthew Cassar, Rickmansworth; Joshua Jasper, via email; Tom Mullan, via email; Tony Southion, London; Eoin Connolly, via email; Paul Hutchings, via email; Stuart



that is pushing away both the casual and hardcore markets. And I don't mean giving Mario a chainsaw (although I'm sure this would help), but darker, subtler plots, characters who aren't mutes, more feeling within the game, more customising of options, that sort of thing.

I miss the emotional aspect of Nintendo – the fear of a crazed sun chasing you across a desert or the sadness of leaving Kokiri Woods. Please, on my behalf, steer Nintendo onto the right path before future generations lose the company that defines and redefines gaming.
Jonathan Mathews, Maidstone

Maybe some of Nintendo's comments have been misinterpreted. When they say they want to make controllers and games easier to use, they aren't doing it for the benefit of the average GTA punter. They're going for the people who don't play games at all – which is the vast majority of the population. It'll be interesting to see how they plan to promote this concept. Ed

"Unimpressed"

I saw the Nintendo press conference and I have to say I was a bit unimpressed. I didn't buy the mystery thing they had going on with Revolution. Why didn't we get any specs? Is it not going to be anywhere near as powerful as the PS3 or Xbox 360? Also among this year's line-up was *Mario Party 7*, which is just ridiculous – I think we might have had enough of that franchise now, guys.

The worst thing by far was this 'new' Game Boy Micro. From what I could see, this advancement in portable play is just a smaller, probably fiddlier GBA. I thought the SP was pretty pointless, but this is just ridiculous. The fact that it's smaller will have no importance to most people – I know both the SP and the GBA can fit in my pockets, so the only advantage is that it will have replacement fascia and a slightly brighter backlight. Yay. Anyway, on a more positive note, *Zelda* is looking exceptional and the news that I might be playing *Mario Kart* and *Animal Crossing DS* online by Christmas is very good indeed.
Daniel Cohen, London

All the next-gen specs you have read so far are entirely theoretical – the machines only exist on paper and as emulators. Looking at it like that, Nintendo is the only console maker that credits its customers with any intelligence. You should be sceptical... Then they go and spoil it all by announcing **Mario Party 7** ***and a repackaged GBA (which I want very badly, I might add). Ed***

Bonus Letters

Given a year or 30, robot technology will have evolved. Hopefully not to the extent that is predicted but almost certainly to the level of household slave.
Aaron Ayling, Macclesfield
I'm having two. Ed

Maybe the GB2 will be for the younger gamers and will be an upgrade in graphics and gameplay, you never know. What do you think?
Daniel Leigh, Jersey
That we were all completely and utterly wrong. Ed

You're in a small, locked, sealed room with Crash Bandicoot and Diddy Kong. You have a pistol – it has one bullet in. Who do you shoot?
Sam Bridgett, Farnham
First I waste the bandicoot. Then I dig the bullet out of his corpse and hammer it into Diddy's forehead using the butt of the gun. Ed

Everyone needs a long, jolly Welshman.
Thomas Cooper, via email
That's right. Ed

I'd be more than willing to try anything you would like me to dress up as.
Matthew Pellett, via email
I'm well aware of this. Bring on the photos! Ed



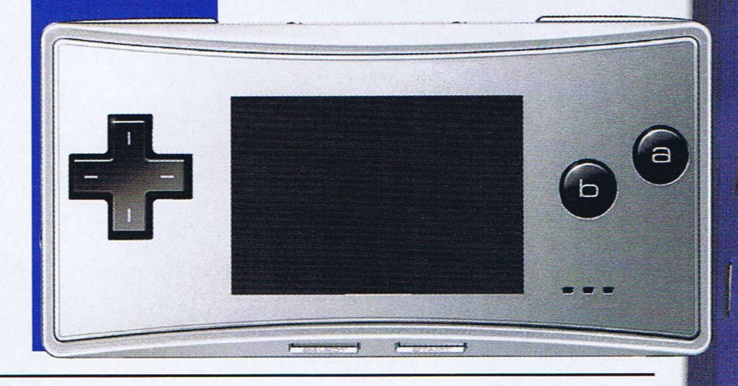
△ **Satoru Iwata didn't know the difference between a v-sign and the old middle finger. So he did both, before lamping his English tutor with the metal brick in his right hand.**

"Heart sank"

In issue 107 you said you expected Nintendo to show us 'a powerful new handheld that will be the true rival to PSP.' As I watched the expo unfold on the internet, I waited with bated breath as Reggie reached into his pocket, proclaiming, "I know you haven't seen this!" My heart sank when he pulled out the Game Boy Micro, yet another gimmicky GBA incarnation with the tacked-on novelty that it's customisable and has the "brightest screen we've ever put on a handheld."

I'm sorry, but what is the point in that? Why waste all the R&D and production costs on churning out a smaller version of the GBA when we've already had Game Boy Advance and Game Boy Advance SP? I'd hoped for something groundbreaking when you said that we'd see a powerful new handheld.

I should have realised this was too good to be true. Why bother doing something new anyway, when you can just repackage something as a gimmick? As Reggie said, it's not new technology, but it's a whole new look. Translation: here's another novelty GBA. Enjoy. Honestly, why do they bother?
Timmy G, via email



CORRECTION CORNER

In issue 107's review of *Yoshi's Touch & Go* on the DS, the two top picture captions are the wrong way around. The Baby Mario image has the caption for Yoshi and vice versa.
Chris Kay, Kidderminster

We like to keep you on your toes. Ed

We just, to our great delight, found a spelling mistake in your magazine. Because it made our day, we felt we wanted to share it with you guys, too. Yes, we love you that much. On page 51 in issue 107, in the caption to the fourth (from above) thumbnail-size screenshot, you printed 'getiing' instead of 'getting'.
Eskil Vestre and Tobias Langhoff, Norway

Because it took two of you to spot this little error, it doesn't count. Ed

Watt, Glasgow; Jonathan Barron, via email; Chris Hawkins, via email; David Morris, Wallasey; Stefan, Seaford; Triantaphillos Constantinou, Greece; Stephen Ashby, Dorset; Robby Bloomfield, Southampton; Chris J Baraniuk, Bangor; Erwin Blok, Netherlands; Andrew Hutchinson, Bingham; John Chattey, Devon; Jake Phillips, Saltash; Paul Davison, Sedgefield; M Genere, via email; David Lawless, Milton Keynes; Richard Luckhurst, London; Graham Jones, Liverpool; Susan McAllister, Manchester; Freddie Porter, via email; John Clements, via email; Christopher White, Dover; Dan Barron, via email; Martin S, via email; and too many others to mention. Thanks for writing, folks. And please include your towns!

CREATIVE CORNER

This month's top arts and crafts masterpieces…

'Link after'

Here's a picture I drew of Link after seeing the new Zelda trailer. Also, a draw-off is a copied picture that hasn't been traced.
Joe Timms, East Kilbride

Nice. He looks a bit like Darren Anderton. Ed

'Girlfriend'

I'm sending you a picture of me and my girlfriend. I made it in Paint Shop. Hope you like it.
Kim Li, Norway

Good work, Kim. Good work. Ed

When somebody told us Nintendo would be announcing a new Game Boy, we foolishly assumed it would be a new Game Boy. I think it's a great design and a guaranteed hit, but obviously not all that exciting when you were hoping for something to give you goosebumps and butterflies. Sorry. Ed

"Everybody craves"

Why does everyone crave huge revolutions like the DS? Sure, the DS was (and still is) a superb idea, but is Nintendo ready to make such a huge leap in console gaming?

Games are still not yet perfected. Think how good *Zoo Keeper* would have been with just a bit more depth. Think how good *Donkey Konga* would be with beautiful, silky backgrounds. Think just how wonderful it was when you saw Pikmin in the grass in *Mario Golf* for the first time, and how cool it was to see miniature Nintendo models in *Metal Gear Solid*. Would you have liked *Mr Pants* so much if it wasn't all so distinctively British? Only a few issues back you said that *Wario Ware Twisted* was so much better due to the small rumble pack that was included.

My point is that this whole 'revolution' is pointless. Why should Nintendo change the style of videogaming when the current one has so much yet to offer? Why are they trying to walk when they can barely crawl?
Ben Rutter, Reading

If the problem is a lack of creative imagination, maybe the solution is to redefine the boundaries that force developers to work on uninspired, samey games. At the end of the day, a console is just a cheap computer that plugs into your TV. But give it a controller that isn't just another evolution of the NES pad, alleviate some of the commercial pressures on the people who create the games, and then perhaps we'll see something that justifies Nintendo's talk of a revolution. Ed

"Groove on"

Having watched the E3 unveiling of Revolution by the wonderful Mr Iwata, I was flicking through my copy of issue 106 to see 'five things you don't see Mario doing these days' featuring, yup, 'bust a move'. Pretty funny after just seeing Nintendo announce that Mario would soon be getting his groove on in his own edition of *Dance Dance Revolution*. Keep up the good work, guys.
Liam Fisher, Romford

Next up – Mario Snowboarding. You read it here first. Ed

"Male suitors"

In your review of *Harvest Moon: Song of Happiness* (issue 107), you mentioned that you didn't check out the male suitors for the female character, as that would have been a bit gay. This got me thinking that, presumably, in the game girl farmers are only allowed to have male suitors, and boy farmers female. It just got me wondering why (and I have noticed this in, well, almost every game to date) there is no option for same-sex relationships (ie a boy farmer being able to date and start a farm with another boy farmer, if the player wanted).

Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to suggest cute games like *Harvest Moon* take an unsavoury twist – I live for cute games. If done in a proper manner – the same way different-sex relationships are dealt with – it wouldn't take anything away from the adorable tone.

I'm not going to go off on some angry tirade about neglect on Nintendo's part or anything like that, because I honestly don't believe that is happening. There have been some terrific steps forward in recent years, with games becoming more inclusive of girl gamers – *HM: SoH* being a good example – so things do look optimistic. I just thought I would put the idea forward.
Craig Fotheringham, via email

I can see the potential for mischief, though, if somebody were to borrow your memory card and send your macho RPG hero out chatting up men for a couple of hours. There are plenty of 'suspicious' characters in videogames already – the Prince of Persia (before he grew his beard), Luigi, Tingle, Slippy, about half of the NPCs in every Zelda title – so it's only a matter of time before somebody falls out of the closet. Ed



△ Don't waste your time, love – he's as gay as the day is long. Still, at least he's a good dancer.

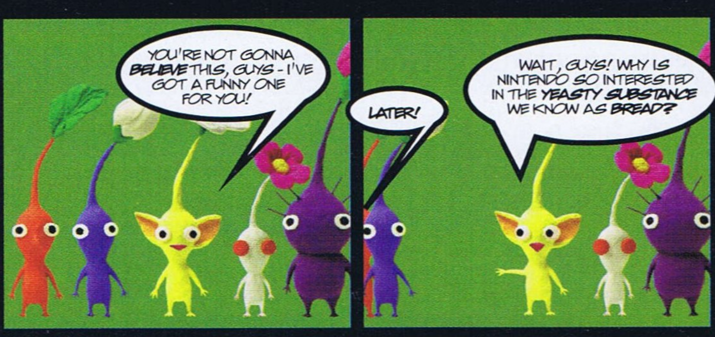
"Quite enjoying"

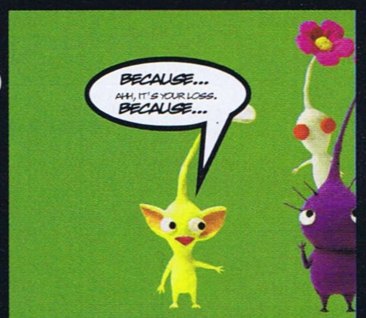
I got a Nintendo DS after few weeks, and I'm quite enjoying it, but I think it's sort of… overrated. Don't get me wrong, I'm a Nintendo fanatic and enjoy all Nintendo consoles, it's just that many people keep saying that it's the best thing ever, but I haven't used my DS for ages because I'm already bored of the games. There are so few games coming out, which is a bummer seeing as I need some good games for my DS.

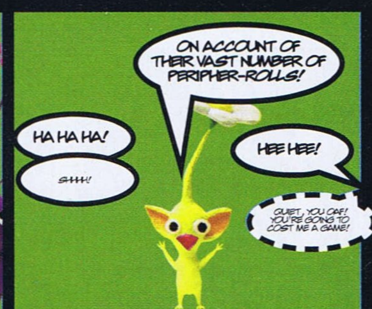
I get the feeling things will improve in a few months – well, they better had. We need some games with decent usage of the touch-screen (*Project Rub* is a perfect example) rather than things like *Mario 64 DS*. Perhaps games such as *Mario Kart*, *Animal Crossing*, *Nintendogs* and others will make me think again about

Grintendo!

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DS. I just hope Nintendo don't let me – and other Nintendo fanatics – down.
Seven Fisher, Ayr

***Most consoles have a quiet few months after the launch frenzy has subsided. There's some very promising DS stuff on the horizon, and if you don't mind getting into a bit of import gaming, there are wonderful things like* Electroplankton *and* Band Brothers *available from Japan.* Ed**

"N64 Classics"

NES games were really good in their day, but honestly, they are a bit rubbish now unless you've played them before and want to relive your childhood. I mean, I haven't bought any of the NES Classics range but I've played the original *Zelda* on the special edition disc, and quite frankly, it sucked badly. I was lost within five minutes of playing in a big bland world of red, orangey brown and green. Good for its time but now it's just plain wrong.

Now there could be a better range of classics. How about N64 Classics, brought out on the DS? It has the processing power. There could be a virtual analogue stick, like on *Mario 64 DS*. Why not? No one who has owned an N64 can honestly say that they don't want to play *Ocarina* again on a handheld. Or *Lylat Wars*, *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* etc. Seeing as I sold my N64 some time after getting a Gamecube, I would be one of the first to go and buy *Ocarina*. Just imagine it, sitting on a bus escaping Redeads, trying to reach Hyrule Castle before night sets in, or even attempting to smack a Kokiri on the forehead with a slingshot. I think N64 Classics would be a brilliant investment for Nintendo.
Rob Sykes, via email

***They'll probably do it. After all, you're going to get to buy all of those games again on Revolution, and they've already held discussions about supplying retro titles for PCs via the forthcoming Gametap service. Is nothing sacred?* Ed**

"Makes sense"

In response to some of the recent correspondence in your magazine, there seems to be too much criticism about Nintendo reusing the same old characters. Now, my theory is simply this: if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Sure, I'll agree *Super Mario Sunshine* was very similar to *Super Mario 64*, but I fail to see how that can possibly be a bad thing. Bearing in mind *Super Mario 64* came out in 1996 and *Sunshine* was released around seven years later, it's hardly as if they're churning out the same game, year after year, with minor alterations (unlike many sports-based franchises). The same theory applies to *Wind Waker*, which had many similar aspects to the excellent N64 Zelda games, but nobody can seriously argue that as being a bad thing.

Let's not forget the Gamecube also helped breathe new life into franchises such as Metroid, bringing whole new aspects to the game. I see nothing wrong with bringing back recognisable characters for brand new game ideas, such as *Luigi's Mansion*, *Wario Ware*, *Starfox Adventures* and *Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat*. When Nintendo has such a vast array of characters and worlds from the past, what's the point of having to create new ones every time they want to make a new game?

Mario Kart, *Tennis*, *Golf* and *Party*, along with *F-Zero*, *Super Smash Bros.* and *Wave Race*, were all highly successful and popular games originally, so it only makes sense to continue making updated sequels as technology improves with time.
James Balcombe, Great Leighs

***I love those characters – they're the reason writing about Nintendo is so much fun. Although I do wish they hadn't adopted Rare's Donkey Kong family.* Ed**

"SP is DS"

Did you realise that SP, as in Game Boy Advance SP, is DS upside-down? Could it be that when they were thinking of the name for the new handheld, somebody handed some papers about the SP to the main man, he read them upside-down and came up with DS? Don't tell me DS always meant Dual Screen, because when they first announced it they said it stood for Developer System. They must have given it two screens when they were trying to figure out what they hell DS could stand for.
Charlie McDonnell, Bath

***Yes, you're probably right.* Ed**

"New ideas"

In issue 107's Mailbox, Robert Ashmore suggested that the score you gave *Starfox Assault* should have been raised because Namco did actually try some new ideas. I think that this is a very dangerous path to go down.

Taking risks, innovating and experimenting should be applauded in an increasingly bland and derivative market, but this does not justify a higher score in itself.

Daring to be different is not good enough when many ideas are badly implemented.
Paul Davison, Sedgefield

***That's why we didn't give* Spongebob The Movie *a higher score simply for inventing the world's first burger-racing level.* Ed**

SO TELL ME THIS...

Your questions answered by the NGC mutha of think.

1. Any idea when Mario Kart DS will be released in England?
2. Do you reckon there will be any chance of a Star Wars RPG for Gamecube?
3. Is the new Zelda set for Gamecube or Revolution?
Ryan Broadbridge, Herne Bay

1. November-ish. Most online titles are released at around the same time in all territories, and that's when it's due to hit the US. The power of logic at work…
2. No. There won't be any more Star Wars games on Gamecube.
3. Gamecube will be its native format but you'll be able to play it on Revolution as well.

1. If Revolution has wireless controllers as standard, will it be possible to use the DK bongos on it?
2. How will Gamecube memory cards work with it?
3. Will there be an adapter so you can get a cable connection between DS and Revolution?
Chris Bounds, Bognor Regis

1. Yes, there are four Gamecube controller ports on the side. Wavebird receivers are built in, apparently.
2. Right next to the four Gamecube controller ports you'll find a couple of memory card slots. Doesn't help with the old N64 controller pak thingies, though.
3. No, it's all going to be wireless. Cables are are already becoming relics of the past, it would seem.



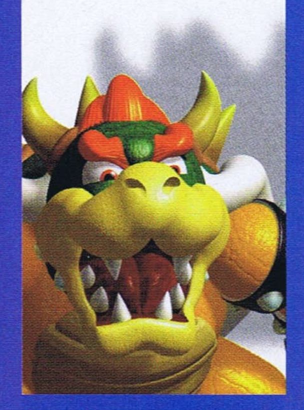




Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles.

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide – it's got:

- **The 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **We tell you which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you…?**
- **A brief description of the game, so if you don't have that issue you can find out the most important points about it.**
- **Highlighted games, with a little more detail. As games join the list, the highlights will change!**

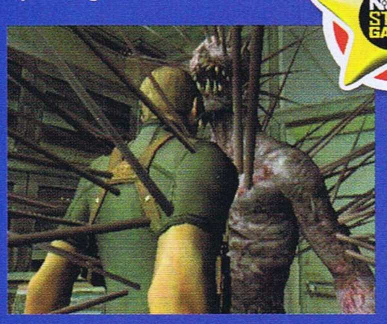


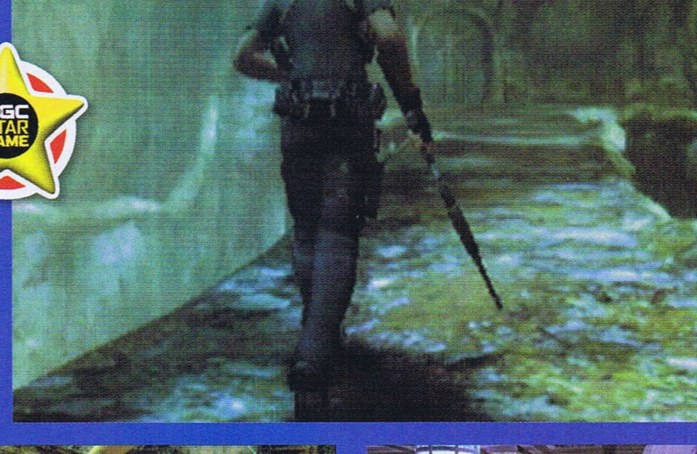
1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

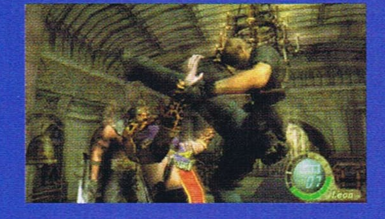
CAPCOM ■ NGC/104

What, no zombies? What's going on? Something spectacular, that's what. This instalment takes the Resi series to the next level, with an unprecedented level of innovation. Gone are the three day long animations of doors opening and in comes this new, far more dynamic game.

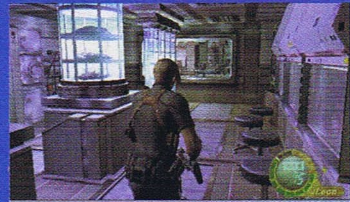
NGC STAR GAME











2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, but this is as close to art as games have got.

NGC STAR GAME







3 METROID PRIME — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible and there's no slow down, despite the huge, incredibly detailed environments. The action is varied and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play.

NGC STAR GAME



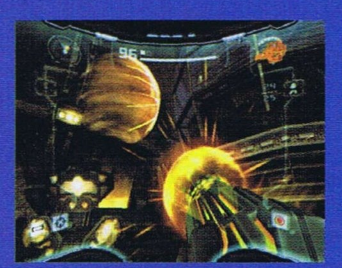
4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story (about vandalism and poisonous brown slime). Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. You need one of those… *(who writes this nonsense? Ed)*







5 METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES 94

NINTENDO ■ NGC/101

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our only complaint.

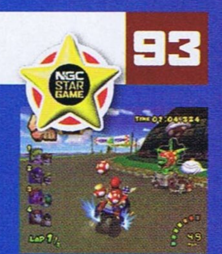




6 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!! 93

NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pick-up boxes, weapons from slippy bananas to green shells, giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lot of fun.



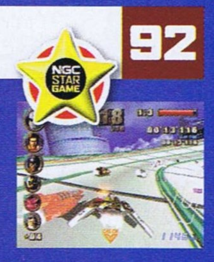




7 F-ZERO GX 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

This is a blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep up the pace without getting framerate jitters. You will never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would have been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



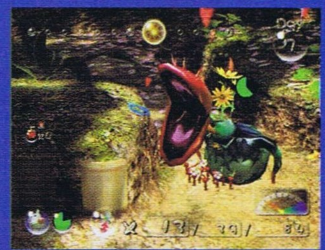


8 PIKMIN 2 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has proved less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to Earth for a longer session of collecting treasure. They've got two new types of Pikmin to help them out, too. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original.







9 SOUL CALIBUR 2 91

NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent, fast-paced fighting. Weapon Master mode is your key to unlocking the eight hidden characters, but the real star of the show isn't hidden. Namco have dropped in Link for the Gamecube version, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.



10 TIMESPLITTERS 2 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'splitters. This means shooting things. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate, you'll wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future and you will love every minute. The multiplayer is the icing on the cake.





TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2
Cute-looking turn-based strategy with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE TWISTED!
Takes the template laid down by *Wario Ware*, then adds a tilt-sensitive cartridge. You'll play it until you're sick.

3 WARIO WARE
Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep returning to.

4 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA
An RPG with puzzle and platform elements, starring our two top plumbers.

5 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
One of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

6 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level design ever.

7 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em into battle – but still the most entertaining RPG out there…

8 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
Nicks the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.



9 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games. A sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing difficulty level.

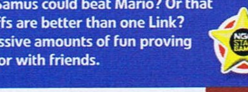
10 HARVEST MOON
A slow burner, *HM: Friends of Mineral Town* is a farming/charming sim to die for. It will last you for months.

DIRECTORY

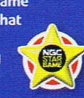
The best Gamecube games around

11 SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

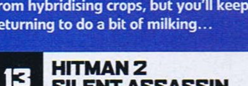


All your Nintendo favourites get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have massive amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.



12 HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE — 91

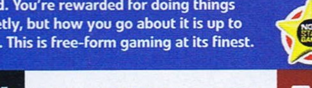
UBISOFT ■ NGC/91



Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change. Despite a new chapter structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and has few new goals apart from hybridising crops, but you'll keep returning to do a bit of milking…

13 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN — 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82



Bald, barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly, but how you go about it is up to you. This is free-form gaming at its finest.

14 MARIO POWER TENNIS — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/104

If you stick with it and learn the ins and outs of the power shots, you're left with an incredibly tactical game. It levels the field, making it a game where the most seasoned veteran can take on the most casual gamer and still have a closely fought match.



15 PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME — 91

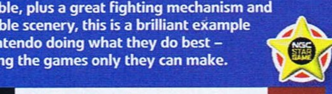
UBISOFT ■ NGC/90

Ubisoft show other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey, but it all reeks of quality.



16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100



With Mario's papery ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only they can make.

17 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

A few tiny framerate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy and it looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is absolute magic.



18 VIEWTIFUL JOE — 90

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Some people love the unusual looks, some people hate them. Either way, get past the cel-shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only adds to the feel. It can be frustrating, but you'll love it anyway.

19 SECOND SIGHT — 90

CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97

Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. The levels are tightly designed, offering scope for replay, while its distinctive style and original touches make it one of the most memorable games we've played in years.

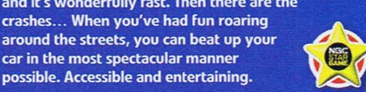
20 METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES — 90

KONAMI ■ NGC/91

This is a superb stealth/action adventure with a healthy pedigree. A great story combined with revamped graphics make this old Playstation title blossom on Gamecube. The voice acting and music are superb. There are some problems: the long cutscenes, it only takes a day to complete and there are too many bosses. We're just picky, though, this is a really, really good game.

21 BURNOUT 2 — 90

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80



The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great and it's wonderfully fast. Then there are the crashes… When you've had fun roaring around the streets, you can beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.

22 WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAME$ — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/97

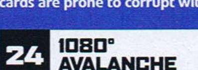
A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's original, outlandishly quirky and very good fun. This comes thoroughly recommended.

23 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 1 & 2 — 90

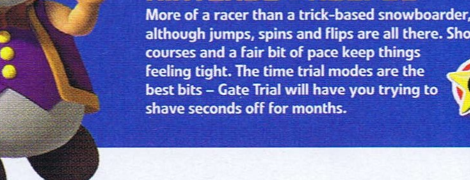
SEGA ■ NGC/78

This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one. 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this.

24 1080° AVALANCHE — 90



NINTENDO ■ NGC/89



More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trial modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off for months.

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
This is a tour-de-force of everything that good gaming should be. An absolute delight.

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN
Good looking with trickier puzzles and, ahem, more 'mature' content.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Luigi buys a mansion and finds it's haunted. It's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT
Sheer bongos-for-D-pad brilliance.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES





MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching pile-ups.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 NBA STREET V3 — 90

EA ■ NGC/104

Think *Space Jam* meets *NBA Jam* meets EA's *NBA Street* and you're pretty much there. For the Gamecube incarnation, EA heaped in a load of Nintendo characters. This is entertaining arcade basketball with all the quirks of Nintendo. What else do you need?



26 ANIMAL CROSSING — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/98

Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full cartoon farming experience can now be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow it's horribly addictive, as you improve your house, fill the museum and get a life.



27 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/81

Vast, boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll change your life" our RPG fanatic assures us. The spaces in between the meat of your quest for some missing moonstones are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping, although it looks dated now.

28 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 — 90

SCI ■ NGC/86

Set during the first Gulf War, this team-based shooter is better than the original *Conflict Desert Storm*. There's a completely new aspect to this one – you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of heroics when you try to save your team.

29 WORMS 3D — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/87

You know the score. You have four worms. Your worms must kill other worms. The special weapons are as crazy as ever (Sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade…), but the only real difference is that it's now in 3D, which will affect your strategies for the better.

30 ETERNAL DARKNESS — 89



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A Lovecraftian horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off a dark, shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls, and when that drops to the bottom… This is a survival horror that spans twenty centuries of history. It's not another *Resi* clone; there's more to it than that. There are a few weaknesses in the combat, but other than that it's very nearly perfect.

31 LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS — 89

NINTENDO ■ NGC/102

This is an obscure *Zelda* game that's pretty hard on the pockets – in multiplayer mode, each of the four players needs a GBA and link cable. Nonetheless, it's great fun, very amusing and would have scored more highly if the best bit of the Japanese version – Tetra's Trackers – had been included.

32 RESIDENT EVIL 89
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore. Then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

33 SPLINTER CELL 89
UBISOFT ■ NGC/81
Only Sam Fisher and his various high-tech gadgets – like sticky bombs and camera disruptors – stand between terrorists and the Free World. The 'three alarms and you're out' rule can become annoying. It's the usual stealth-'em-up stuff, but done with a fair degree of flair and polish.

34 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 89
SCI ■ NGC/80
This is a rare breed: a multi-platform release that is about as far from the 'lazy port' title as you could possibly hope. This version has been fully optimised for the Gamecube. *Conflict Desert Storm* is wicked fun and intensely tactical. The multiplayer is absolutely great fun as well.

35 SSX 3 89
EA ■ NGC/87
Snowboard around one giant mountain, entering races or showing off tricks. Complete all three peaks and you'll get the chance to spend 15-30 minutes tricking your way down the whole mountain. The framerate can be glitchy, and it's not quite as free-roaming as it seems at first, but it's a superb game.

36 DONKEY KONGA 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/99
Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on-screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer is worth the expense.

37 PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN 88
UBISOFT ■ NGC/102
The Prince is older and his game's got more 'mature' (so, scantily-clad ladies and smart-arsed comments have been dropped in). It's still great to look at and great to play, with trickier puzzles than the first game, and although the fighting is a bit dodgy, the rest of it more than outweighs that problem.

38 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 88
EA ■ NGC/98
This is a big game. There are probably lost tribes in there if you play for long enough, but you won't see them if you have other interests, like a job or a social life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

39 LUIGI'S MANSION 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67
The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's TOO SHORT. Apart from that, his escapades in his newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. The man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

40 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88
SEGA ■ NGC/67
The first ingenious update of the old classic *Marble Madness*, with encapsulated monkeys rolling around bizarre landscapes, collecting bananas. Minigames include obvious ball games like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types, pounding each other's faces in: just what we've always wanted!

VIEWTIFUL JOE
Absolutely spectacular 2D-yet-not-2D side-scrolling single player fighter.

DEF JAM VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2
There's more of the same inventive gameplay, but there are no substantial changes to the successful formula.

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES
Samus Aran takes on the deadly Ing in this solid sequel.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT
A great update, though not the revolution that was promised.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks great and the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel are no more.

41 TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT 88
EA ■ NGC/105
This wasn't the revolution that was promised, instead it was just given a bit of a spring clean and a rethink. However, the multiplayer's still explosively good fun, the trademark humour is in place, it's packed with juicy extras and the Story mode is now a lot more cohesive as a single-player game.

42 NBA STREET V2 88
EA ■ NGC/84
This is basketball fitted with EA's successful Street template. You simply don't need a serious basketball sim in your collection – this one is stacks of fun, and unless those real-life stats really are absolutely vital to your enjoyment of a game, *NBA Street* has got everything you need. Three-on-three action, stunt combos and special moves – all this is crammed into an incredibly fun, fast-moving game.

43 DONKEY KONGA 2 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/108
A second chance to wind up in casualty with tendonitis. The songs may be cover versions, the menus may be pretty poor and there aren't enough minigames, but this is more of the same bongo and beats action that we all loved the first time around. Just don't play Solo mode in a crowded room: you'll look like a moron.

44 DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT 87
NINTENDO ■ NGC/103
Get the bongos out, it's time to change your gaming habits. Gone are the days of using the D-pad for platformers, who needs them when you've got bongos? This sounds confusing, but it all makes perfect sense in practice. You'll need a Radox bath to soothe your aching arm muscles by the end of it.

45 MADDEN NFL 2005 87
EA ■ NGC/99
The main change to this instalment is the inclusion of the hit stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that and a few tweaks to defensive plays and franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual, with all the usual stats and player updates you'd expect.

46 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87
EA ■ NGC/82
All your favourite rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Start as a mere rookie and fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, then you'll have the pick of the ladies – although their blokes won't be too happy… Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

47 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67
Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it! – but it's such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds, stunts and a huge range of locations. Come on, this is Tony Hawk – before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

48 LOST KINGDOMS 2 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81
Although nowhere near as good as *Zelda* and *PSO*, *Lost Kingdoms 2* is a beautiful looking card-based RPG – statophiles are going to love building up their decks, collecting new cards to add to it and crunching numbers. It's nicely broken up into a series of small and easily digestible pieces.

49 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87
LUCASARTS ■ NGC/68
Without a doubt the best Star Wars game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note: the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

50 VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 87
CAPCOM ■ NGC/105
The sequel to *Viewtiful Joe* is a bit more of the same. There's no revolutionary gameplay here, instead the game seems to take assured and considered steps forward to slightly alter the gameplay and therefore the puzzles involved, although the inclusion of Silvia – the new character – is welcome.

51 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 86
UBISOFT ■ NGC/90
Wonderful looking action adventure with you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning and the speech and effects make the grade, too. Even the minigames are fun. The world is huge and detailed, but it is slightly easy and it won't last as long as you'd like.

52 FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES 86
SQUARE ■ NGC/91
Multiplayer RPG for up to four players, but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this expensive if you're to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared air bubble can be claustrophobic, but all in all this is good looking and ambitious.

53 WARIO WORLD 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
Punching, pounding, portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N). The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game, and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

54 BURNOUT 86
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
This was an absolutely killer racer in its day, but it was massively improved upon by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth framerate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2*, because it's got all that and so much more. Not that you'd be unhappy with this, far from it!

55 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86
SEGA ■ NGC/87
Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

56 PIKMIN 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Only Shigsy could have come up with a real-time strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth is a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. It looks as wonderful as it plays, but it's just too short.

DIRECTORY

The best Gamecube games around

57 XIII — 86

UBISOFT ■ NGC/88

Unusual graphics, cel-shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (sequences of images, guns that literally go 'bam'…) set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace, and when that's all over there's a great multiplayer mode.

58 NFL 2K3 — 86

SEGA ■ NGC/79

Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing together effectively. However, the enormous franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American football, if a tad out-of-date.

59 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING — 86

EA ■ NGC/87

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this decent hack 'n' slash takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom.

60 NBA LIVE 2004 — 86

EA ■ NGC/88

Underneath the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected, impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats, facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved and you've got more offensive options. It's soulless but slick.

61 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/78

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Great cutscenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old Resi atmosphere (a coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere…).

62 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR — 85

NINTENDO ■ NGC/95

For a Mario game there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses – it's just not as wacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, Tiger Woods. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

63 IKARUGA — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/80

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the easy difficulty. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles and you have to shoot the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all.

64 FIFA 2004 — 85

EA ■ NGC/87

The healthy rivalry between FIFA and Pro Evo continues. This is the best football sim on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players, teams and stadia. The free kick system's been tweaked, and the corner kicks are now menu-driven. It's all here.

65 EXTREME G 3 — 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This is an underrated gem. It's very fast, the tracks are huge, sprawling and well-designed, and you'll find some very cunning uses for the inventive weapons. The only downside to it is that it's a bit soulless and the multiplayer mode is nowhere near as good as it could have been.

66 SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY — 85

UBISOFT ■ NGC/106

This was the game that was supposed to give the Splinter Cell series a kick up the arse; unfortunately that didn't happen. What did happen was a thorough spring cleaning – the levels are no longer linear, for example – and as a result it feels much fresher. The addition of a co-op mode is also very welcome.

67 SPIDER-MAN 2 — 84

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96

How long have we been waiting for a game that actually makes us feel like a superhero? Well, it's here! Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll actually feel the joy of doing whatever a spider can. It's not detailed and some of the quests and missions get a bit samey, but still… that swinging!



68 JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH — 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Dredd Vs Death sees the famous Mega City One come to life. Sadly, it's not an especially *long* life. While it lasts you get to play as ol' chinny himself: solving crimes, nailing perps and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot-on, which will make it appeal to fans of the original comics and graphic novels. Apart from the length, the fiddly controls are the only other let-down.

69 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM — 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The Pokémon series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters. There's an awful lot of fighting here and you'll need a GBA Pokémon game to get the most out of Colosseum mode. If you're a fan, you'll love this.

70 TALES OF SYMPHONIA — 84

NAMCO ■ NGC/100

This is very much a traditional RPG, and a very good looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the locations are all, without exception, stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will irritate as well.

71 RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC — 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/78

Rayman somehow manages to create a fun platformer, despite the fact that he seems to be stuck in an age when this kind of thing was revolutionary. But it's bright, it's solid and it's got some enjoyable minigames. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right.

72 ISS2 — 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

This series was untouchable, but then EA found out and made their FIFA games better. They both ramped up their quality while the GC ISS was left behind in their wake. *ISS2* is a good game, but we were expecting much more of it and unfortunately these expectations weren't met.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own a Gamecube in itself.

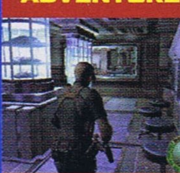
HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE
Not your traditional RPG, this is an endearing, farming treat of a game.

TALES OF SYMPHONIA
A beautiful and epic RPG with the best battle system on the Gamecube.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



RESIDENT EVIL 4
Takes the Resident Evil series to new heights by cranking up the action.

HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the team that brought you *Timesplitters 2.*

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Dark, psychological horror – exclusive to Gamecube.

73 ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE — 83

LUCASARTS ■ NGC/88

Star Wars is all about screaming TIE fighters and taking on Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. The on-foot sections are a bit of a trudge and they ruin the excitement of the rest of the game. But it looks and sounds great, and the two-player *Rogue Leader* rules.

74 SERIOUS SAM NEXT ENCOUNTER — 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

Don't be fooled by the name, this is very silly indeed. For a mere £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly-coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. Okay, the killing can get a bit relentless, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's the man. Never mind the depth, feel the speed!

75 BATEN KAITOS — 83

NAMCO ■ NGC/103

Role-playing adventure with card-based battles. This game is unique and delivers a wonderful, magical and fantastical world – the stunning vistas, towns and interiors are awash with lavish colours. Even the card system works well. Unfortunately it is let down by some stilted and painfully wooden voice acting.

76 FREEDOM FIGHTERS — 83

EA ■ NGC/86

Although this is less serious than *Conflict Desert Storm 2*, this is an enjoyable squad-based third-person shooter. Many of the levels interact with each other, so objectives completed in one mission will affect the events in another. Forget the serious side, this is pure fun.

77 FIFA 2003 — 83

EA ■ NGC/75

This was the turnaround for the FIFA series. After having the football crown stolen by *Pro Evo*, EA sought to re-establish themselves as the kings of the footie game. The result was a remarkably in-depth, fluid and well presented game of football. This is a massive leap forward from previous FIFA games.



78 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 — 82

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100

The irrepresible Tony Hawk juggernaut rumbles on. This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode features a lot of Bam Margera. Some bits don't belong in a skateboard game, like driving vehicles and walking (which just grates against the gameplay – tricks on a lawnmower?). Those bits are rubbish. The rest is great, and includes chunks of the first three games – with a timer!

79 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82

SEGA ■ NGC/78

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys probably carry guns and want you dead. Inside balls (WHERE A MONKEY BELONGS!), the little creatures are an absolute delight. The format is the same as the first in the series. There are new minigames, and over 100 levels.

80 METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM — 82

VIVENDI ■ NGC/88

As hard as Ray Winstone in a steel top hat, this robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the difficult training level. The enemies are extremely resilient and have superb AI, so you need to be accurate and quick. The camera can be awkward and landscape hazards can be unfairly harsh.



81 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III: CARD REV. — 82

SEGA ■ NGC/94

This is a new idea and a new direction for Phantasy Star Online – card-based battling. You now have to choose a side (you have a choice of either the Arkz or the Heroside) and do battle with dice and cards. It's best if you are familiar with the original *PSO*, and unfortunately, you'll need a broadband adapter, which can be pretty tough to find. If you do manage to find one, then this is a pretty decent RPG.

82 THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT — 82

EA ■ NGC/89

Having spent the previous game imprisoned in their own home, this instalment sees your virtual people released out into the real world to work. It still doesn't exactly look brilliant and it doesn't sound too great, but as with all games with no absolute goal or plot, it will last you for a very, very long time indeed.

83 NFL STREET 2 — 81

EA ■ NGC/103

The game that tears up the rulebook and gives you licence to run like hell. This sequel boasts a new ability that allows you to run around the walls Prince of Persia-style to gain height when running, catching or passing a human pile-up. A quality package, though probably without mass appeal outside the US.

84 OCARINA OF TIME MASTER QUEST — 81

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

This game is nothing short of a bargain. Although the graphics haven't been updated that doesn't mean that the gameplay isn't up to scratch. This version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles from the original *OOT*. Forget the graphics (it's an old game) and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

85 AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/72

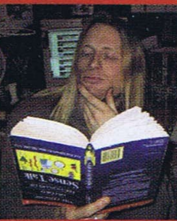
A top class rollerblading sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means that you can pull off moves like swinging around lampposts. There's even a Career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is rubbish and the graphics are a little bland.

86 THE SIMS — 81

EA ■ NGC/79

Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would: leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. There's no point to it and there are no objectives, but that's life for you – meaningless, but you want to keep doing it.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



BONSAI!!?
"I want a bonsai elephant. It'd be great fun… though you wouldn't want to over-water it. It'd probably swell up to the size of a melon… a bit like like a melon-phant… It could also make an amusing noisy water pistol/whoopee cushion combo – the possibilities are endless!"

BROWN FINGERED
"Those seeds you get in bread, right. If you planted one, you'd get to see what a bread tree looks like."

UTTERLY, UTTERLY, HOPELESS!
"Kiwi Reception Babe, Cute Waitress Pixie, Saucy Hoover Girl, Sexy Printer Girl – they all loved the 'affectionate' names I gave them. Well at least I'm sure they would have if I'd ever found the courage to ask them their real names… … I find waving with both hands, and grinning like an idiot doesn't really make girls want to talk to you."

Three words: Moron, Sacked, You're. *Ed*

Do you have more 'sense' than our own sense-spewing Art chimpanzee, Paul? More than likely! So send 'em in. The best get printed, and if you're really lucky, he may send you a ball of doghair and chewing gum. Lucky you!

Send them to Paul at **paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk** or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

87 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE — 81

EA ■ NGC/83

Ever wanted to indulge in the life of an F1 driver? Now you can. This is a part of EA's F1 series, but with the addition of an extensive Career mode. There are a series of trials to prove you can handle the F1 disciplines, then you can get on with the racing part, which looks good, shifts well and handles nicely.

88 NHL 2005 — 80

EA ■ NGC/99

This is a slick, quick game of hockey. The action's quick and the AI and graphics have been improved, but if you dislike the sport there simply won't be enough here to convince you that it's worthwhile. For the fans though, it's easy to learn and you can rack up huge scores. Good fun.

89 MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier MKs, although it's far too easy to get an infinite by button mashing. The lack of ring-outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

90 BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81

Endlessly battling goblins and orcs can get a little tedious, but if you've ever played D&D you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. However, it's a lazy port from PS2, with slowdown and a jittery framerate. Nonetheless, the game still looks a treat despite this problem.

91 PAC-MAN VS — 80

NAMCO ■ NGC/90

This tiny gem is free, but only when you buy another, inferior full-priced title (*R: Racing Evolution*). While *Pac-Man Vs* isn't particularly complex, the four-player mechanic works well. Think of it as a trifle to have fun with between serious gaming sessions. You'll need a GBA and link cable to play it properly.

92 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY — 80

EA ■ NGC/99

Following on directly from the end of *Def Jam Vendetta*, this is yet another wrestling/rap crossover that will appeal to fans of both genres. The wrestling is slickly executed and there's a massive amount of unlockables and extras to keep you occupied. Unfortunately, it is ruined by a poor framerate.

93 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN — 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/87

After a succession of gaming stinkers, the Simpsons take a tip from the Grand Theft Auto series and set about stealing cars, taking on missions and doling out a bit of cartoon-style violence. It's certainly not original by any stretch of the imagination, but it is loads of fun.

94 MARIO PARTY 5 — 80

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

Ain't no party like a Mario Party; except all the other parties in the series. This console-based boardgame is one of the best yet, but is still really only good as a multiplayer game. The board game bits are a little slow and dull, but the minigames (popping other players' inner tubes, mech fights…) are hilarious.

95 DIE HARD VENDETTA — 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/74

WARNING: Do not play this in earshot of old people; the swearing on display here may offend their sensitive ears. However, there's a fair bit of gunplay, excellent set-pieces and cheesy dialogue. This has plenty of all three, all hampered by cumbersome controls and frustrating sections.

96 POOL PARADISE — 80

IGNITION ■ NGC/92

Not just UK pool – poke your cue at eight-ball, nine-ball and stunt tables too if that's what fills your triangle. Using the analogue stick to power your cue is a nice touch, and darts and *Dropzone* feature as minigames. Earth shattering? No. But it's all solid and playable, as you'd expect.

97 PUYO POP FEVER — 80

SEGA ■ NGC/91

Puyo Pop – if you've never heard of it you must have started gaming all of a week ago. It's quite simple: match coloured blobs that drop from the top of the screen and – hey presto! – they disappear. How radical is that? The two-player mode is a whole lot more fun than you'd think, too.

98 HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN — 79

EA ■ NGC/95

A Potter title that actually works pretty well as a game? Whatever next? The way you use the differing skills of Harry, Ron and Hermione to solve problems adds interest to a rather thin storyline. The controls are a bit iffy, but the atmosphere's spot-on. Not just for Potter fans.

99 NFL STREET — 79

EA ■ NGC/90

American football isn't quite brought to the masses by *NFL Street*. Even though the strategy has been dumbed down it's still very stoppy-starty and so can be slightly drawn-out. We'd also have liked a custom play editor or a wacky training mode to help players get to grips with the basic plays.

100 BEACH SPIKERS — 79

SEGA ■ NGC/72

Not to everyone's taste – although developers AM2 have at least abandoned the jigglies and concentrated on making a proper sports sim. You'll need lightning-quick reactions and good team control to succeed. Its single-player appeal is limited, so you'll need to play with friends to get the most from it.



FLASHDANCE!

- **Are you capable of performing an Irish jig upon a bin liner surrounded by cushions?**
- **Can you retain your dignity while hot-stepping alongside your Grandma?**
- **Do the words 'Sunshine Mix' make you want to get up and boogie?**

We have vacancies for entertaining, outgoing individuals with poor musical taste and the ability to dance on the spot while staring at a television.

Competitive salary • Previous applicants welcome • Box DDR

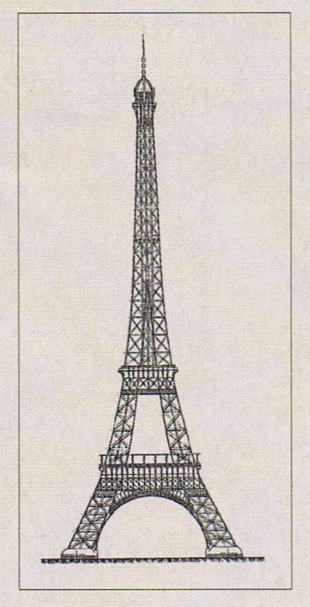
VIDEOGAME PRODUCERS

Don't waste your time and money searching in vain for that special character.
Here at the **Mushroom Daily Plumbing Mail** our carefully targeted recruitment ads reach the kind of candidates mere market research cannot hope to find.

To advertise on these pages, simply Warp Whistle our Sales Department immediately.

KNOW THE WORLD?

Question: If you could see this popular landmark, which continent would you be in?



a) France
b) Copenhagen
c) Africa

Ambitious **Geography Teachers** who know the answer should apply without delay for this once-in-a-lifetime position.

- Tweed jacket with faux leather elbow patches supplied to the right candidate.
- Socks/sandals negotiable.

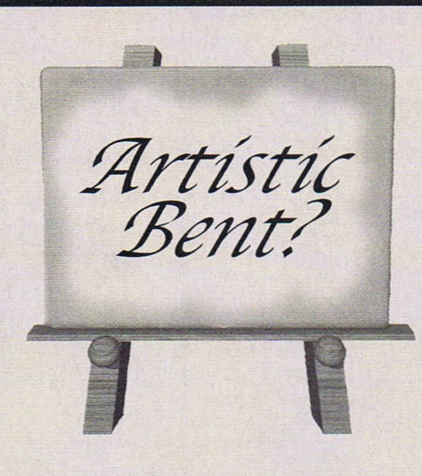
Box MIM

Demolition man

Minor TV company seeks experienced wrecking crew with dubious safety record for a brand new reality show.

If entire undiscovered species have been deliberately wiped out during one of your demolitions, or you have attempted to kill your site foreman (and have the videotape to prove it) we will make you a star.

Boswer Productions Inc, Box WRK



Art tutor required. Must be able to colour within the lines. Rudimentary musical talent an advantage. Overalls and fly swatter supplied.

Box MP1

MEDICAL EMERGENCY!

Due to National Disaster a General Practitioner is urgently required!

We have a serious viral outbreak that threatens to become pandemic. Naturally, we have no idea how to stop it (althrough somebody did mention vitamin pills) so we are placing this Situation Vacant advertisement in the hope of hiring an expert to sort things out. You know, before our citizens start coughing up their own lungs and all that.

This position would ideally suit a hairy man of questionable personal hygiene.

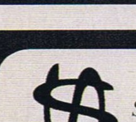
The successful candidate will:

- Have excellent colour vision.
- Have no medical experience whatsoever.
- Possess own white coat.

No references required.



Apply directly to the Mushroom Kingdom Consulate.



Sporting Chumps Foundation

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ALL SIX OF THEM.
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Gentlemen, start your engines! Ridge Racer DS brings you wireless multiplayer gaming for up to 6 players with only one Game Card. Friends can download any track from your Nintendo DS and the race begins. Ultra-realistic graphics, 32 cars, 20 spectacular tracks and countless sleepless nights.
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